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[AT THE "WOLF'S HEAD."]

CHRISTINE'S REVENGE;

OR,

O'HARA'S WIFE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The wind is blowing
In turret and tree;
My gaoler sleeps—
I will be free!

The painful story of the wild wedding of Lady Elaine Harwood and Roland O'Hara, the Fenian peasant, was known by this time to all the servants in the castle; to every soul upon the domain of Donnamore who had come to man's or woman's estate; to all the inhabitants of the town of Dungan. Nay, the very bizarre sensational tale spread to Dublin, crossed the sea, and found its way to London.

Already gossips in the higher circles shook their heads over the strange transaction. All the influence of the earl and countess could not prevent the news from being inserted in such of those papers as cry down the aristocracy and exalt the masses.

The countess knew all this. However much her proud heart ached, she only reared her proud head the higher, albeit that her ebon tresses were slightly sprinkled now with grey, and the circles under her eyes were deeper than of yore.

Christine Mattelle was not once alluded to by the countess. She forbade all her servants to mention that name in her presence. She resolved that soon the name of her fair child

Elaine should be covered by the same cloak of silence and apparent forgetfulness.

Lady Donnamore made up her mind that Elaine should enter a sisterhood for life, and that when once she quitted her after giving her up to the care of the good sisters she would never look upon her face again as long as she lived.

Lady Clarice was put into possession of the main facts of what the countess called "this terrible case," for the young girl asked so many questions, and pined at the separation from her sister so much, that some explanation was necessary, and the worldly-wise countess decided that it would be far better to tell her young ladyship the truth than to allow her to pick up fragments of the story from disjointed talk and exaggerated gossip, and thus to believe "something more hideous and distorted than even the actual facts, if that were possible," said the countess.

Lady Clarice wept sore when told that she would never see her fair sister again; that she was dead to her; that she must forget her.

"I cannot," she had said.

But the mother soon ruled and subdued this grief, or, at least, the manifestation of it, and Lady Clarice submitted, shed no more tears, and went to spend a merry fortnight at Courtraven with the Ladies Levison.

Elaine, the prisoner, saw nobody save her female gaolers. It was a wonder that the young, excitable brain did not turn during those days of suffering. She would assuredly have fallen into raging fever had she not made up her mind to that one course of action—escape.

"How is it to be done?" She asked herself this question night and day.

She knew, as we have said, where to put her hand upon her money and gold ornaments; also she knew all the ways and winding passages of this grand old castle where she was born, and which was now her prison.

"If I am to die, let me die free. It is worse than death to be a prisoner!" the young wife said to herself. "Oh, Roland! Roland! I wonder if you think of me! No, no, he is thinking of his trial; he is thinking of his death, from which my cruel parents will not rescue him!"

It was the dead of the night, and a storm was howling round the castle. Many people sleep all the more soundly when the wind is high. Elaine had heard this. The fire in the patent grate burnt brightly; a French clock on the mantelpiece struck one.

One of Elaine's attendants slept in the room that had been occupied by Christine. The other woman occupied an outer room through which Elaine must pass to reach the corridor. She got out of bed and began to dress stealthily before the fire. She heard the deep, loud snores of the woman who slept in the inner room. She dressed in fear and trembling, and enveloped herself in her large fur cloak; then she went to her wardrobe and filled a small bag with a change of linen; some toilette necessaries; her money (only a few shillings), and her gold ornaments.

The key of the outer door hung in the dress pocket of the woman who slept in the outer room. That dress hung in a closet in the same outer room. To steal into that room (which was dark) without shoes on her feet (for she had put them into the bag) was the idea of Elaine, but then how should she find the closet and the



especial dress pocket in which was the key without a candle to guide her?

"But unless I do," said Elaine, "they will make me a prisoner for life, and when my child is born they will take it from me."

So she crept into the room noiselessly and began to feel about for the door of the closet. Now this room was in complete darkness. In feeling the wall searching for the door Elaine struck against a chair. The woman started up in her bed awake, calling out:

"Who's there?"

Elaine remained perfectly still, while the woman, after listening for a moment, muttered, "The wind," and composed herself again to sleep. Then Elaine felt the wall again, and soon found the closet, entered, and began to feel the pockets of several dresses. At last she had the cold, heavy key in her eager grasp, and now, how is she to find the door in that pitch darkness? She had forgotten at what side of the room it was, or at least she could not find the exact place in the dark.

"I must wait for a gleam of light, I fear," she said to herself, "and I am so faint and so weary, if I sit down I shall fall asleep," for a strange weariness and faintness overcame her.

All at once a gleam of moonlight came slanting across from a window where the curtains had slipped aside, and this gleam guided Elaine across the wide room to the door. She thrust her key in, turned it noiselessly, and stood in the long, carpeted corridor.

"Free!" she said; "at least free of those hateful rooms where I have spent so many weeks; and now how to get out of this house, once my happy home, now my hated prison!"

She decided to attempt to escape through the servants' offices. Noiselessly she threaded the staircase, and soon found herself on a wide landing with numbered doors. There the servants slept she knew, and a staircase led down to the store-rooms and Mrs. Kenny's sitting-room. In this room was a half glass door leading out upon a flight of steps which again led across a secluded gravel path to the shrubberies.

Since the attack of the Fenians every door in the Castle was supposed to be barred, bolted and locked with extra care.

"But if the key is there I can manage that," said Elaine.

She found her way all in the dark into this apartment. She knew where the housekeeper kept her matches, for this room had been a favourite haunt of Elaine as a child, and Mrs. Kenny was very methodical. So Elaine struck a light, unbarred the door, and found her way out into the grounds.

Once out in the storm, for the winds were raving, and every now and anon the rain fell, Elaine shivered and shrank, and asked herself, "What would become of her?" But she never looked back once with longing to the stately home of her childhood.

"No, no, no," she said, "I may cry with old King Lear that the winds are not so unkind as those whom I have loved, but who are now more ruthless towards me than wild beasts. Mother! mother!" She looked up at the Castle and lifted her hands, "I take farewell of you now and for ever. I do not know what fate holds in store for me—none of us do, but I feel that I have done for ever with my past—with the friends of my childhood—with the associations of my youth. I have done nothing worthy of imprisonment for life, and I do right to escape from it."

Then she turned and hastened away, through the shrubberies, through the park, out into the high road, all without meeting a soul.

"I ought to go to Dungan," she said to herself, "that I may see Roland, but if I do they will give me up to my mother again. No, I will get on and find my way to London, and there I can hide."

Yes, to hide, to hide for ever from the cold face and pitiless eyes of the proud mother who had treated her like a criminal ever since she had discovered the secret of the terrible marriage, was her chief desire.

"All love has gone out of my heart for ever.

Henceforth, Lady Elaine Harwood, you are no daughter of mine."

Those had been the words of the countess, spoken like a death sentence, and the heart of Lady Elaine shrunk within itself. All the love of the child for the mother dried up at its source; the very springs were annihilated forever. Away she sped along the high road, while the boisterous winds held high revel in the tall, naked trees by the way, and shrieked and roared and clamoured like angry demons sweeping down from the mountain sides in heavy gusts that nearly took Elaine off her feet. She had buttoned on her boots, and she trod pretty firmly, notwithstanding that the road was dark and slippery.

"When can I reach Dungan?" she asked herself.

At that moment the blast of a horn sounded shrill and clear on the night air. Elaine paused and listened, and drew up close to the hedge-side. She heard the sound of wheels, and the trot of a horse coming along rapidly from behind the castle. She went out into the road and she shouted at the top of her voice:

"Stop, please, John MacCan. Mr. MacCan."

"Hollo," answered a rough voice. "Who are you?"

But the driver of the mail-cart, for he it was, drew up in the road. Elaine hailed the sight of the red lamps burning on either side above the shafts as she would have hailed the kindly eyes of a friend.

"My name is Anna Beal. I am a niece of the butler at the castle," said Elaine, who suddenly remembered that the butler, whose name was Beal, had a niece called Anna, who was apprenticed to a milliner in Dublin. "I want to get on to Dungan to catch the early train for Dublin. Will you give me a place in the mail-cart?"

MacCan peered down into the road that he might judge for himself as to the kind of person this Anna Beal appeared by the red light of the lamp. He only saw a figure in a dark long cloak carrying a bag on its arm.

"Get up," he said, roughly, "if you can. Here, give us a hand with the bag."

Elaine scrambled up, not without difficulty, and took her place on the cushioned seat by the side of the driver. He drew up the reins and trotted off in the teeth of the wind and the rain.

"Begorra, my lass, and your uncle turned you out late on a stormy night to meet the mail-cart. I wonder he didn't come with you."

"He knew I should not be afraid," Elaine answered, "and I must get to Dublin in time," she added, vehemently, "or my mistress will be so angry."

"Begad, and sure some of the women folk's hearts seems made of iron," was the philosophical remark of Mr. MacCan, as he flicked his whip in the air as a warning to his horse, who forthwith sprang onwards with renewed energy.

Now Mr. MacCan's time and energies were pretty well monopolised by the arduous duties of driving his mail-cart between the towns of Killala and Dungan, a distance of some fifty miles—twenty-five each way.

It was a cross-country route, as yet unpaved by railway cuttings. MacCan and his cart were due at Dungan every morning at half past two a.m., that the letters might be sorted at the Dungan Post Office for the Dublin and English mails.

Lady Elaine had known all this for years. As a child she had sometimes lain awake in the small hours when she was ill or feverish, and during summer she had listened eagerly for the loud pealing of the postman's horn as the mail cart rattled along the highway below the grounds of the park, for she knew then that in an hour or so the light would break.

When she made her daring and dangerous flight from the home of her ancestors on this stormy winter night, Lady Elaine had had no remembrance of the coming of the mail cart along the windy lane, where the storm was rocking the tall trees. She welcomed it now as she had never welcomed the sight of

the elegant brougham in which she had driven with her countess mother and her young sister in the park.

She gathered her fur cloak about her more closely, and listened like one in a dream to the disjointed talk of the mail-man so long as he confined himself to the topics of the road, the snows last December, the hard frosts in January, the winds this month, the storms that might be expected next.

All at once he began to talk about the Fenian prisoners and the partial sacking of the Castle of Donnamore.

"I suppose, me darlint, you wasn't staying with your good gentleman uncle when the Fenians got into the Castle in November last?" Then without waiting for an answer, he went on: "It was a near touch, I believe ye, that they didn't burn it to the ground and murder the whole lot. The blood of the boys was up and no mistake."

He flicked his whip in the air; the horse started forward. Again Elaine did not reply. Her heart beat fast. What would MacCan say next?

"I don't hould with the boys myself," he said, "not in many things they did that same day at the castle. One blew half the face off a fair lady; now I'd whallop him if I caught him, but they say he's gone over the says, and left his wife and chilid to the parish. I don't quarrel with them for smashing all my lady's fine Jem cracks, not I. She set more store on them than on her own daughters by all I can hear. Did you happen to see Elaine—Lady Elaine, the eldest; she as married with poor Roland in London? I heard it was at an old city church, and the governess put up the banns. A real downright love match, and Elaine, that's the biggest girl, you know, will have a fine fortune before she's twenty, but the countess is going to send her into a madhouse for life, poor thing; a sweet, pretty crayther, they say, and as dovelike as possible, but I suppose the countess would have her put to death if the law allowed. Aye, but she's the hard-hearted woman."

Still Elaine answered not, indeed the mail-cart driver seemed not to wish for any responses, so long as he had leave to talk as much as he liked himself, but Elaine longed to put one question to him, "Had the Fenian prisoners been removed?" and "What would be their ultimate fate?" It was some time before MacCan gave her a chance of speaking; when he did, she asked:

"Have they taken away those—men from Dungan who are accused of the murder of Foster?"

"Well, I heard they were to be removed tomorrow," replied MacCan. "Poor boys, it will go hard with them, and Foster was the black-hearted screw, Heaven rest his soul; it's ill speaking harm of the dead, but it strikes me as queer, mortal queer, that such a fuss is made about that land shark, when the gentlemen and servants at the castle shot down seven men on the threshold, and there's never been a mortal word spoke against them at head-quarters, although there's seven widows left mourning in the country, widows left poor and starving, and with large families, whereas widow Foster has a snug farm of her own and some thousands in the bank."

Elaine knew that the answer to this was that the seven men shot dead were those who were striving forcibly to enter her father's house, and that their lives had been taken by the defenders of the castle, and the women and children within its walls, but she attempted no defence of "her class;" her sympathies were with the people.

"Do you think they will be condemned to death?" she asked of the mail-man.

"Who the boys? But indade they will, the one that shot him and the two that didn't shoot him. They'll all be hung for examples. They'll be taken to London to be tried and to be hung, because they are afraid of a rescue here, and well they may be. Widow O'Hara's boy is as good a boy as the sun ever shone on. He wouldn't hurt a fly much less a man, except in

fair fight, and to think, begorra, he's the son-in-law of his lordship. I don't doubt the countess will get him hanged off quick if she can. They say too there's to be a child; it's to be put in a foundling hospital and never to know its own name, girl or boy, whichever it is; but I don't doubt me they'll let it die of cold or something if it's born up there," jerking his thumb backwards, "at the castle."

"How my mother is hated amongst these people!" said Elaine to herself. "I never knew it before. It seems horrible to be hated by the poor, and I new am one of the poor—one of those whom the rich oppress!"

"We'll not be long now before we're in Dungun," said the mail-cart man. "Your train for Dublin don't start till four o'clock, and there won't be a fire in the waiting-room at the station for a good hour. You'd best come on with me to the 'Wolf's Head' and have a sup of something warm by the side of the fire. They always have one there alight for the mail-cart man these wintry mornings, for it's no joke to have driven five-and-twenty miles in a wind like this, so you can sit by the fire and have a sup of something warm until it's time to go to the station. You know your way, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes."

They were now in a ravine between two bleak hills, and the wind drove full upon them from the north. It had changed; it was a wind that betokened snow—a wind to chill the marrow in the bones.

Elaine shuddered; it was the first time in all her hitherto sheltered life that she had actually suffered from exposure to physical cold. Oh, what a dull pang shot through her young heart as she thought of the dreary, desolate future that spread before her! She was so ignorant of business and of the world that it never entered her head to conceive that in two years' time she would be the mistress of her own fine fortune and estate. Indeed, the countess had striven to drive that idea from her mind. She had told her that it was only the indulgence of the earl which had saved her from becoming a prisoner for life in a lunatic asylum, and that as it was all her future was arranged for her. She was to enter a religious sisterhood and pass the whole of her life there as her mother ordered. Elaine had no idea that the law would stand her friend. She saw only poverty and obscurity for herself in all the years that lay before her.

"My mother will give my estate to Clarice," she said to herself.

The countess indeed had already appropriated the estate of Elaine, or most of it, in her own mind.

"She shall remain in the sisterhood," she had said to the earl, "and the estate must pass to Clarice."

For the countess considered her will as being above the laws of her country.

"I wonder shall I always suffer like this, and always have companions like this?" Elaine asked herself.

Strange to say, desperate as her circumstances had become, she had given up that morbid longing to die which she had continually expressed during the time of Roland's estrangement from herself, and while yet the story of her wild wedding was a secret. She felt now the need of action.

Cold and crushed and heartbroken as she was, her youth and vigour, and the vitality of her race asserted themselves.

"I must live for the child who will look to me for all things; I must live as the daughter of an earl, as the wife of a poet who has died in the cause of liberty should live—nobly, honestly, though obscurely, though I shall have to earn my bread and moisten it with my tears."

Still she shivered, she shuddered, she longed for warmth and shelter, and the voice of a loving friend.

"Who then loves me?" the earl's daughter asked herself. "Roland perhaps, while his chains clank and he thinks of the gallows as his gaol, may fling a stray thought of kindness to the girl to whom he knelt and prayed, but since

then he has learnt to hate me, and though he has found out his mistake, he has no time now for regretting me. No, he was too full of shame and anguish when I saw him last, to give any thoughts to love. My parents hate me, my sister will be taught to do the same. Elaine Harwood, there is not a more desolate creature on earth than you are at this minute."

All this while the mail cart was driving between the two dark hills, and the north wind came rushing to meet the travellers, breathing threatenings of snow.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow,
Get thee to thy rest again.

COLD, bowed down with physical weakness and heartfelt sorrow was Elaine when the mail cart dashed into the struggling little town of Dungun, and after rattling along a rough stony street, stopped before the door of the "Wolf's Head," a mean and ancient hostelry, in a street narrow and poor, with a row of houses on one side and a few shabby shops on the other.

The "Wolf's Head," and Lady Elaine Harwood was thankful as any shivering beggar girl to enter its stone-flagged kitchen which served alike for tap-room and parlour, and seating herself on a three-legged wooden stool, to hold out her half-frozen hands towards the fire. About three-quarters of an hour's drive through the bitter night air had taught her some hard lessons of what the poor endure, and of what she might be expected to endure in the dark days to come.

And yet she did not ask herself piteously, "How shall I bear it?" No; she had struck out for herself in the battle of life, this delicate, fragile girl, and the proud blood of her proud race stirred now in her veins.

"I will battle on for myself until I die," she said to herself, "and I will never part with my freedom now as long as I live!"

"Here, take a sop of this warm coffee, my lass," said a rough voice in her ear.

Elaine looked up and saw MacCan at her side, holding a large cup of smoking coffee in his hand.

"And there's a sop of whisky in it," said MacCan, with a wink; "it will warm your blood and put courage in your heart, and don't be feared, there's nought to pay, not a penny piece."

"Oh, but I must," began Elaine.

The mail-cart man patted her shoulder kindly and patronisingly:

"Ye'll give me offence, me darlin', if you spoke of it," he said, "great offence, begorra, so just drink it up, and then I'll send a boy wid you to the station, for it's late for the likes of you to be in the streets alone."

Something in the air and garb of Elaine, as revealed by the dimly burning gas jet in the room, struck honest MacCan all at once as peculiar.

The jacket the young girl wore was of rich sable fur. It descended to her heels; it was indeed rather a greatcoat than a jacket. The hat she wore was of the same; the exquisite delicacy and beauty of the wan face struck him also. He was a man of slow perceptions and ponderous habits of thought, but there was something here that puzzled and set him wondering. Elaine thanked him gently, and drank the warm coffee, and ate a large biscuit with thankfulness.

"And you're the butler's niece, are ye?" said MacCan, speaking suddenly, at length. "Well, me jewel, he's a strange man to let a pretty lass like yourself wander about in the lanes after one o'clock in the morning; indade if I would see him I would give him a piece of my mind."

"Don't, I entreat you," cried Elaine; "mention me to nobody if you have any pity or any kindness in your heart."

MacCan stared at her in mute surprise. At last he said:

"Well, me jewel, trust me. Whatever your

secret is it's safe with me, and if ever you should be in want of a friend don't be afraid to drop a line to me—Jack MacCan, Keen's Terrace, Killalo."

Lady Elaine drew out a cardcase and wrote down the name and address. She said to herself:

"If ever I can repay this man's honest kindness I will do so."

"And now I've had me soap I'll be off," said Jack; "but here's a lad will take you to the station at three o'clock, when it will be open and a fire in the waiting-room. Mayhap you'd rather wait there than here till your train goes at four; and you needn't give the lad money. I've give him a penny, me jewel, and now the saints be wid you and guard you till we meet again."

Elaine faltered her thanks, and the good mail-man strode away to his cart, which was now due at the post-office.

A rough, barefooted woman was serving in the room as barmaid, waitress and stoker. She came and made up the fire, and stared hard at Elaine.

"Ye'll be tired and ye'll be cold," she said.

Elaine answered briefly, "Yes."

"Least said soonest done," remarked the woman, as she trotted off.

Elaine felt very drowsy, but she would not give way to the weariness that threatened to overpower her. She was afraid of the prying eyes of the barefooted woman. She studied faces in the fire till the boy came to tell her that the station must be open now, and then she followed him out into the bitter cold of the wintry streets. The ground was sprinkled with snow and cruel winds drove in her face. She held her head down and thought of Roland in his cell, and she could have sent out her voice in an agonised cry upon the wind.

Arrived at the little station she dismissed the boy with a sixpence from her poorly-stocked purse, and then went eagerly towards the large red fire which burnt in the grate of the bare, dingy little room. She placed a shabby chair before it, sat down, and not thinking she was watched any longer, she fell into a strange, disturbed sleep.

Dreams weird and terrible came to her as she sat before the fire. She was pursued by a pack of hungry wolves as she fled on the back of her favourite white pony "Nap" (now, alas, fast forgetting her in the stables of Donnamore) along a snow-covered waste. She saw the moon flying through squadrons of cloud. She heard the pack yelling behind her, and then all at once "Nap" stumbled and she awoke—awoke with a start.

She heard the sound of many feet—a measured tread, and looking up, saw a file of men in dark clothes, two and two abreast, entering the room. With a smothered cry of horror she started to her feet. The policemen came towards the fireplace and stood around it for warmth. In their midst were three miserable men clad in the sorriest rags. All these men wore handcuffs. The one in the centre was Roland O'Hara, Lady Elaine's husband, bone of her bone, flesh of her flesh.

He was deathly white, worn to a shadow, with deep hollows under his eyes. Elaine looked at him piteously. He seemed in a stupor. He did not recognise her. He was, or appeared, oblivious to all his surroundings. The look of wild despair which she had seen in his face when he was in his prison cell had given place to one of dull apathy pitiable to witness. All the daring and dash and spirit and pride of youth seemed gone from the young face; only a blank was left. He was very ill; he had walked through the freezing night air in his thin jacket and ragged shirt. No greatcoat, no scarf; his feet were almost on the ground; he coughed a hollow cough, and then his eyes wandered towards the fire, and rested on Elaine. For full ten seconds he looked at her without one gleam of recognition in his dark eyes; then all at once a glad wild light sprang into them. He raised his poor hands as if he would have clasped her

to his heart, and found them hampered by the cruel handcuffs.

Elaine stepped towards him; no shame withheld her, only the dread that she would be recognised by somebody and sent back to Donnamore and to her mother. Neither of them spoke one word.

With all those hard and pitiless witnesses to listen to everything, instinct whispered them to be silent, but their eyes spoke in spite of them.

"Stand back!" said the man in command, roughly, to the prisoners, and the three handcuffed men fell back cowed and obedient as dogs.

The guilty one, he whose hand had sent Foster to his death—he whose doom was sealed as surely as if the rope were already about his neck, looked with pitying eyes on O'Hara, and would have spoken but the policemen growled him into silence. All they had seen was a young lady seated by the fire in the waiting-room ready for the four o'clock up train, and they thought she had started and been frightened at sight of the prisoners. Presently the ticket-boxes opened and the police got out their passes, and Elaine went and took her ticket.

Second-class; she could not afford first, though the distance to Dublin was not more than fifteen miles. Her travelling companion was a little, talkative old man who had lost most of his teeth, and who was going to Dublin on a visit to his son who "was a grocer," as he informed Elaine. He also told her that the three Fenian prisoners who were to be tried in London for the murder of Lord Donnamore's agent, were being conveyed by the same train.

"You see, they'd be sure to bring them on early in the morning," said the old man, "for fear of a rescue. What I can't understand is how those officers and gentlemen ever let them come into Donnamore Castle and drink the wine and smash the drawing-room things as they did. Why didn't they make barricades of mattresses on the stairs, and shoot them all dead as they entered the hall?"

"Why, they did bar the shutters and pile furniture against the hall door, and kept them out for hours, shooting at them from the upper windows," began Elaine, and then she stopped. Had she betrayed herself? No, no; the old man without teeth went on chattering all the way to Dublin.

He was one of those who are very valiant after a fray, and he wondered very much how it was that when the rebels entered the house they had actually overcome and made prisoners of all the defenders of the castle, tied their hands and feet, and locked them up in the stables.

"They say the rascals meant to make a bonfire of them—all those gentlemen," said the old gentleman, chuckling and rubbing his hands. "They had shot seven of their men, and they meant to take a horrible revenge."

Elaine covered her face with her hands and asked herself what Roland would have done had his comrades perpetrated so hideous a murder?

"He would have hated the name of Fenian and rebel ever after," she said to herself. "As it is he will die for the cause, which is a bad, bad cause after all. Ah, poor Roland, I wish that I could die for you."

When Elaine arrived at the Dublin terminus it was quite impossible to obtain another view of Roland, the crowd was so great, but she saw a hideous prisoner's van waiting to take the Fenians, and a shouting, dirty, derisive crowd gathered round it.

"Am I become one of these?" she asked herself, with a shudder, for the code of the countess, her mother, admitted of no middle class. There were only two in her judgment, the high and the low.

Elaine hurried away.

"I must sell my ornaments," she said, "my watch and chain and bracelet and cross. After that I must start for London, and then I will find out Colonel Blandford, and beg him to intercede with the Queen for Roland's life."

Fear child wife, she had made up her mind to

prompt action. While in the train this thought came to her:

"Other people have power as well as my parents. Why should not a wife plead for her husband?" And now she must sell the ornaments.

It was still quite early, not six o'clock, but a few of the shops were open, and the dawn was breaking. A few street lamps were yet alight. All at once she saw a man taking down the shutters before a huge window. Inside hung watches and chains, while clocks, bronzes, china and antique pictures formed a collection which Elaine thought rather handsome. She saw by the lamplight in the shop these words: "The utmost value given for gold, pearls, precious stones."

"This is the place for me," she said, and she sprang eagerly into the shop, opened the bag with trembling hands, and proffered all her jewels at once with a most unbusiness-like eagerness to the lynx-eyed shopman. He tested the gold with some acid, and peered at the stones through a magnifying glass. He soon shook his head and assured Elaine that the watch and chain, which had cost the earl twenty guineas, were not worth five; that the heavy bracelet, jewelled cross and necklace were not worth more than six pounds altogether. The bracelet had been a present from Elaine's godmother, and had cost fifteen pounds.

"Only eleven pounds for all!" cried Elaine, "and I thought they were worth fifty!"

Still necessity has no law. Elaine parted with her treasures, and went away with the eleven sovereigns in a purse hidden in her breast.

"I must start for London to-night," she said, "whatever happens, for I am afraid if I stop in Dublin my mother will find me."

Just at that moment she felt a hand laid on her shoulder, and turning suddenly and with fear, found herself staring up into a face strange and unknown to her, and yet a face that looked with earnestness and recognition into her own.

(To be Continued.)

D O U B T .

You tell me, friend, that when we sleep beneath the grass and clover,
No one will ever come to weep, our quiet slumber over.

Your faith in human love is small, or else
you would deceive me;
For those we love the best of all, will mourn us. Oh, believe me!

You say the paths of those we love lead on beyond our slumber,
And they will soon forget the one called heavenward from their number.

My friend, not all the care and fret that
stirs the world about us
Can make the truest heart forget, when it goes on without us.

My friend, 'tis vain for you to say my dear ones will forget me,
And if I can believe that, in this age of doubt, pray let me.

Our loved ones never die to us. They live and love for ever,
And those beneath the graveyard grass shall be forgotten never. E. E. R.

An English lady drew a prize in the Paris lottery which was made up of a dozen dish covers, a fan, a petticoat, and fifty cigars.

PATTI gets ninety-nine thousand marks for singing in Berlin nine nights. We remember getting about that number at a boarding-school once for singing one night—and we didn't sing long, either.

CLAY PIPES AND THEIR MANUFACTURE.

TOBACCO and the pipe are articles the habitual use of which has become general all over the globe. Among the branches of industry which have been a consequence of the introduction of tobacco, the manufacture of pipes has become of considerable importance. Immense quantities of wood, meerschaum, china clay, and pipe clay are annually converted into pipes, principally in England, France, Germany, and Austria; a smaller quantity being produced in Holland and Turkey. Wooden, china, and meerschaum pipes are made mostly in Germany and Austria, and among clay pipe producers England takes the first rank. Although the value of clay pipes is comparatively small, the enormous quantity in which they are made makes them an important product of industry to England.

The principal pipe factories are located in Dorsetshire and Devonshire, where a pure variety of potter's clay is found in great abundance. It resembles kaolin in its character, although it contains a little less silica, and remains quite porous after baking. The clay is first freed of all impurities by levigation, and then undergoes repeatedly a process of kneading and curing in open tanks, exposed to the air, in much the same way as clay for other purposes is treated. After it has acquired the desired plasticity, it is divided into masses of about 50 lbs. each, which are then given to the formers.

The first step in making a pipe is the formation of the stem in a metal mould. A small lump of clay is left attached to the rod, of which the cup is afterward formed. The rod is then pierced throughout its length with an oiled brass rod. Holding the pipe by the free end of the stem, the operator now imparts to the cup its external form by means of a copper mould, in which if ornamental pipes are to be made are engraved the designs. It is provided with a spring to open it automatically. The pipe then passes to a third operator, who forms the inside of the cup with his fingers and establishes communication between the cup and the stem by piercing the separating wall with the brass rod.

The pipe is now put aside to dry in the sun, after which it is ready for the oven. Three men finish from 600 to 700 pipes a day. An oven usually contains 2,000 pipes. The pipes are generally baked for eight or nine hours.

Ordinary pipes receive no glazing of any kind, while some of the better class are painted and glazed. They are very porous, hence their tendency to adhere to the lips. To overcome this the mouth ends are dipped in water containing a little pipe clay in suspension, and polished. By this means the pores of the clay are stopped. Pipes of better quality are covered with a mixture of soap, wax, and gum, and then polished.

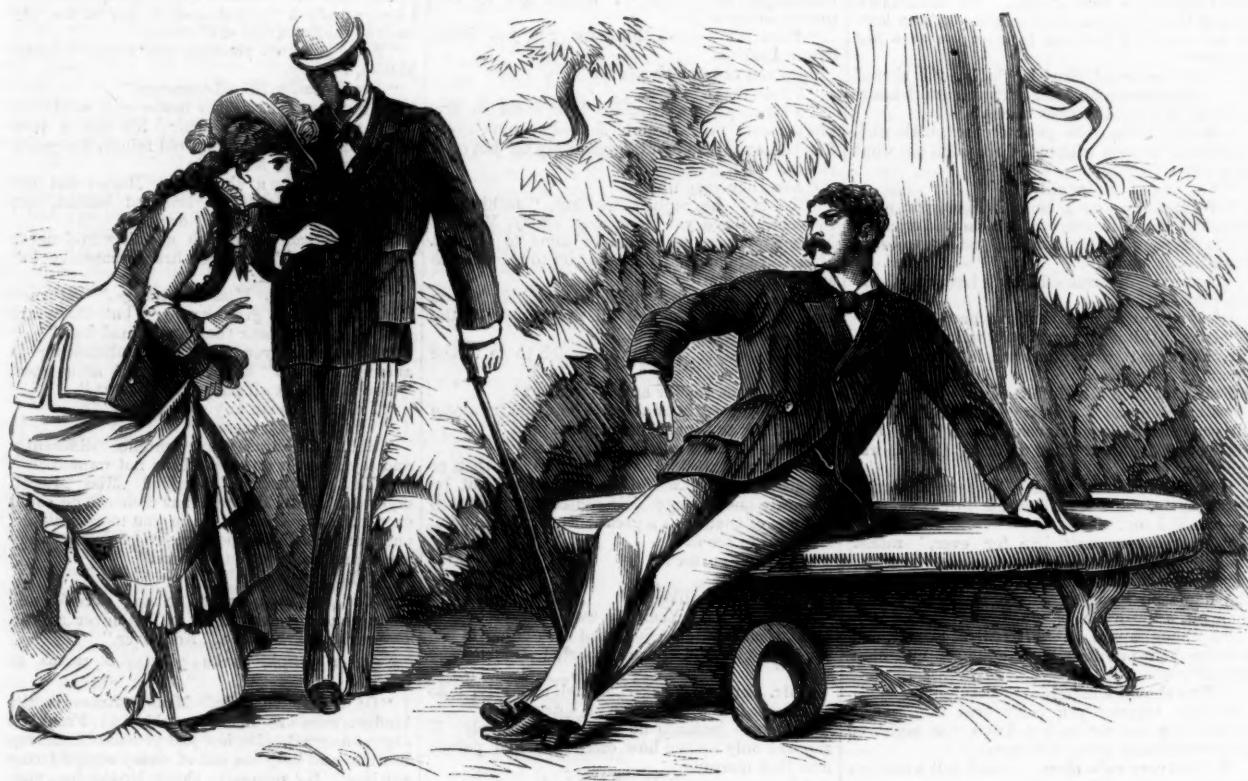
Difficulty is occasionally experienced in holding the pipes in proper position in the oven. Some manufacturers fill the oven with fine sand after the pipes are in position. The sand fills all interstices and supports the pipes.

THE LATE PRINCESS ALICE.

The following anecdote is told of the late Princess Alice. There is a fine picture of a scene in the war of 1870-71, in which Prince Louis of Hesse was represented leading his gallant division in one of the hardest encounters of the campaign. When the sketch for the picture was first exhibited by the artist at Darmstadt the Princess Alice had just come back from her day's work at the hospital.

"Madame," exclaimed a bystander, "your royal highness can regard that picture with pride, because it is true."

"Yes," replied the princess, "I can, general, for I know the prince lives; but I feel sure that he would be with me in the hospital had he not been obliged to be in the field."



FRANK BERTRAM'S WIFE; OR, Love at First Sight.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"That Young Person," "Why She Forsook
Him," "Strong Temptation," &c., &c.*

CHAPTER X.

MURIEL IS CHANGED.

Standing with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet.

LONGFELLOW.

The two friends spoke little more of Mona Grame and her representative. Charles Stuart felt instinctively the subject was a distasteful one to Frank. He called himself at Myrtle Villa the next day, but did not succeed in finding Beatrice at home, and then having made several calls and a few purchases in the gay capital, he very contentedly ensconced himself opposite our hero in a first-class railway carriage, and they set out for Downshire.

The time which elapsed between his visit to the New Theatre and his leaving London had been spent by Frank Bertram in one long struggle—an effort to forget Beatrice Grey. He never deceiv'd himself. He confessed he loved her as he never should love again; but his pride revolted at marrying a girl whose beauty and talent had been exhibited nightly at so much a head.

He pictured the cold reception of the Downshire gentry, the bitter disappointment of his mother, perhaps the cruel awakening that should follow his brief infatuation, and he thought all

these had conquered his love, and so he went home without another visit to Kilburn.

Mrs. Bertram received the friends with hearty welcome. Her plans for Frank and Muriel had been sadly thwarted by her son's journey to London, but now he had come back to find Muriel bright and winsome as ever, and surely, if he had eyes for beauty, he would hasten to secure her for a lasting ornament of his home.

Then began halycon days, when the sun shone brightly, and Muriel's life seemed golden with happiness. There were long excursions in the pretty country round the Knoll, there were moonlight ramblings in the grand old avenue, twilight music in the drawing-room. If ever man had excuse for falling in love Frank Bertram had it when he was thrown into familiar, daily intercourse with sweet, dainty Muriel.

He liked Muriel very much. He was quite aware of his mother's wishes, and knew they would never be gratified; but he never spoke to her on the subject, and was all kindness and attention to Miss Lestrance.

Mrs. Bertram was delighted. She thought the two understood each other perfectly. Muriel's brightest smile and gayest sallies were for her host. The matron began quite to pity Mr. Stuart as being left too much out in the cold, and devoted herself generously to his entertainment, for Miss Lestrance gave him little of her time and attention. Indeed, as the weeks wore on Muriel seemed positively to dislike him.

She was barely at ease in his company; never voluntarily spoke his name, and started when she heard it suddenly from another's lips. Pretty winsome Muriel seemed quite changed; the bud was blossoming into the flower; the child was ripening into the woman; love was surely awakening in her heart, and Mrs. Bertram never doubted that love was for her son.

Perhaps Mr. Stuart shared his hostess's opinion; perhaps he was offended that Muriel shunned him. When he had been about a month at the Knoll he took to absenting himself from the pleasant rambles they had all been used to take together. Mrs. Bertram secretly appre-

ciated his discretion. Frank supposed him busy about a new play, and Muriel buried her thoughts in her own heart, and grew graver as the days wore on.

One bright morning, when all Frank's persuasions had failed to induce his friend to join them, Muriel sat with the mother and son under the spreading boughs of a grand old cedar tree where they often came when the sun was too hot for walking or driving. Her hat lying idly at her feet, Muriel sat in perfect silence, lost in thought. Frank was watching her keenly, and Mrs. Bertram deciding they could both spare her very well, made some trivial excuse and returned to the house.

"Muriel!" said Frank Bertram, suddenly—he had dropped the Miss Lestrance in the first days of their acquaintance—"do you know you are very much altered?"

He was looking into her face earnestly; his clear eyes fixed on her blue ones. There was no evading his scrutiny.

"It is so hot," said Muriel, hurriedly.

He smiled and answered, gravely:

"The heat may make you pale and tired, but not silent and sad. Do you know, Muriel, I have hardly heard your voice this morning? And I don't believe you ever laugh now as heartily as you did when you first told me the history of Nehemiah Biggs."

Muriel smiled. Even now she could not keep quite grave at the recollection.

"Are you pining for your Aunt Martha, or do you long to listen to one of Mr. Stubbs' sermons?"

"I am not pining at all. I don't long for anything, Mr. Bertram."

"Something ails you, Muriel. Shall I send for the doctor and ask him to tell us what is the matter?"

"No; you are laughing at me."

Frank took her small hand in his large, firm ones.

"Do you know, Muriel, I am very fond of you? When I came home and found my mother had such a dear little friend I wished

you might stop here always. You seem like a part of the old place. Muriel, will you stay here as my mother's pet and look on me as a big brother?"

"Yes," returned Muriel, gladly, "I should like to stop here with Mrs. Bertram, and I know you will be a kind brother to me."

"Well, if I am to be your brother, little girl, you must be open with me. Now, tell me what is wrong?"

"Nothing at all, indeed."

"Well, I suppose I must believe you after that, but don't forget our compact, Muriel. I am to be your big brother and you are to bring me all your troubles."

"You seem determined I shall have troubles," retorted Muriel.

"I hope you won't; they are hard to bear."

"I don't think you ought to talk of trouble, Mr. Bertram; why your whole life seems a dream of happiness."

Frank laughed a little bitterly.

"I am rich and I am strong; I think that is all you can find in my favour, Muriel, you told me yourself at our first meeting that I was middle-aged."

"You have lots of friends," returned Muriel, persistently, "and Mrs. Bertram thinks there is no one like you."

"My mother can't live for ever," rather sadly; "what then, Muriel?"

"Then you will have Mr. Stuart," speaking the name on impulse, and blushing the next moment, a blush not lost on Frank.

"I thought you hated Charles Stuart. I wonder you put him in as one of my blessings?"

"Why should I hate him?" petulantly.

"Why because you can't bear any young men. You told me so you know the night of your confidence about Nehemiah."

"I was very rude then. I can't tell what you must have thought of me."

"Would you like to know? I thought you a charming child, but you are altered now."

"You spoil your compliment," pouting.

"Not at all; you are just as charming now, only you are not a child."

Muriel looked up astonished.

"I was just as much grown up then as now. I had begun long dresses and bonnets even so long before. When I had my first bonnet—it was a brown straw—Aunt Martha said I was a woman."

Frank laughed.

"Ah! but she was wrong, those sort of things don't make children into women."

"What does then?"

But Frank did not answer her; the question was an embarrassing one; he took up another subject.

"Do you know that we are going north for some shooting next week, Stuart and I?"

"What a shame to kill the dear little birds."

"Women never see the difference between torturing a robin and shooting a pheasant."

"But is there any?"

"Of course."

"Then what is it?"

"I can't tell you. Muriel, my child," paternally, "you ask too many questions."

"Well, as you don't answer them, I am not much the wiser. I shall ask another. How long are you going to be away?"

"I shall turn up for Christmas like a bad shilling. I do not expect to be back much before."

"Are you going to shoot from now till Christmas?"

"Not quite. I have some visits to pay; I've promised Stuart to stay over so long with him at Blyth Hall, and then I must be in London some time."

"Do you ever go to the theatre when you are in London?"

For a moment Frank was displeased at the question, recollecting his last visit to the theatre, but he knew Muriel could have no hidden meaning in asking, and he replied, simply:

"Yes."

"If I lived in London," pronounced Miss

Lestrangle, decidedly, "I should go to the theatre every night."

"Then it's a good thing for you you don't live in London."

"Do you not like theatres?"

"I hate them."

To his surprise a troubled look came to the girl's face. Tears trembled in her blue eyes. She laid one little hand appealingly on his coat sleeve.

"Are they very wicked?"

"No, no," he replied, smiling, "nothing of the sort. Have you never seen a play, Muriel? Mother must be persuaded to come to London after Christmas, and I'll take you to the theatre as often as you like."

"Oh, thank you," with a gratitude which seemed to Frank out of all proportion to the promise. "I am so glad."

"What makes you want so much to go to the theatre, Muriel?"

She did not answer and he went on:

"If you like to hear about things theatrical you should talk to Stuart: he is stage mad."

"Does he know all the actresses?"

"No," said Frank, laughing, "hardly that, or his acquaintance would be boundless; but he certainly knows some. He writes plays himself, and one of them was a great success: all London has been to see it."

"Did you go too?"

"Yes."

"And did you like it?"

"The play? Yes. It was very pretty: a romantic love-story; just the last thing in the world you would have expected Charley to write."

"Mr. Bertram," asked Muriel, abruptly, "do you think it is wrong to be an actress?"

For some instants he made her no reply. If she had only known how often she had pained him that morning!

"I suppose not," he said at last.

"Uncle Stubbs used to say no actress could get to Heaven; but if only very pious people went there I can't help thinking it would be a very dull place."

"Never adopt Mr. Stubbs' creed, Muriel, there are good actresses, just the same as there are good women in private life, not that I should like to see you on the stage."

"I never shall be there," simply. "I haven't a bit of taste for it, but why do you hate theatres, Mr. Bertram?"

More for the relief to himself than from any meaning the words might have for her, he answered:

"Because they have caused me a great disappointment."

Time had flown during this conversation; as Bertram spoke they heard the sound of the heavy gong."

"There is the bell for lunch," said Muriel. "How the morning has gone, and what a long time Mrs. Bertram has been looking for her knitting!"

Frank smiled to himself at the girl's simplicity. "It is only the first bell," he said aloud; "we have half an hour yet. Shall we walk home by the lake?"

Muriel rose slowly and tied on her broad-brimmed hat, then they started.

"Surely that is Stuart in the lime walk," said our hero, ten minutes later, as they saw a figure in the distance, sitting on a bench.

"Yes, why is he sitting there? He must have heard the gong."

Frank waved his hand to summon his friend, the signal was returned, but Charles made no movement.

"There's something wrong," said Frank to Muriel. "Will you go on to the house whilst I go to him?"

"I would rather go with you," and she went.

"Now, what's the meaning of this?" began Bertram cheerfully as he drew near his friend; "you shut yourself up all the morning under the pretence of business, and we find you sitting here enjoying a solitary ramble after refusing to join us."

"Not enjoying," explained Charles. "I am

sitting here only because I can't get any further. I have sprained my foot against one of the old roots of the trees and can't move."

"Have you hurt yourself very much?" asked Muriel, timidly.

"Pretty badly, Miss Lestrangle."

"I must go back to the house and send two of the men down with a chair; it's not a very dignified way of travelling, old fellow, but you'll excuse it. Come, Muriel."

He was off like a shot; but Muriel did not heed the summons, she lingered behind, not quite knowing what to say or do.

"If you had come with us this would never have happened," was her first womanlike but indjudicious remark.

"Perhaps not, Miss Lestrangle," returned Charles, with a grim smile; "but there are worse things to bear than a sprained foot."

"I suppose you mean my chattering is amongst them?" she retorted, in annoyance. "You are not at all polite, Mr. Stuart."

"I did not mean any such thing."

"What did you mean?"

"Shall I phrase my sentence differently and say I never go where I am not wanted?"

"That's nonsense," decided Miss Muriel, severely. "Mr. Bertram has done all he could over and over again to make you more sociable, and you couldn't expect me to go down on my knees and implore you to come."

"I did not expect it."

"You are very unkind to me," said Muriel, taking an aggrieved tone. "You never make a pleasant remark to me. No, never."

"Other people make plenty, it seems to me."

"Of course they do. Mrs. Bertram is the kindest creature in the world, and Frank is almost as good. He has just promised to be my brother and help me out of every scrape I may get into. He seemed to think, by-the-bye, that I should get into a great many, which is not a comforting prospect."

"Did he really promise to be your brother?" with a marked emphasis on the last word which Muriel utterly ignored.

"Indeed he did. How surprised you seem. Did you really think I was so horrible nobody would like to have me for a sister?"

"I am very glad you are not mine." And after that rude speech there was no time for Muriel's answer before Frank Bertram arrived with two of the servants, and poor Mr. Stuart was borne in a chair to the house, where Mrs. Bertram sympathised very much with his accident, and looked inquiringly at Muriel as soon as she got her alone, just as if, the girl said afterwards, "she thought I had some great big secret to tell her."

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. BERTRAM'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

Thou troublest me. I am not in the vein.

SHAKESPEARE.

Poor Mrs. Bertram! When one has built all one's hopes on a certain thing coming to pass; when one fondly believes success is about to crown one's efforts, it is hard to be deceived. It is wonderful what a commotion Charles Stuart's accident made at the Knoll. It is equally wonderful the strange influence it had on this story; but that is for time and future chapters to relate.

A doctor was sent for on the afternoon of the disaster, and pronounced the sprain a very severe one, declaring it would be weeks before the patient was able to walk as usual. Mr. Stuart suggested he had better go home at once than cause so much trouble at the Knoll, but his hostess overruled all his objections. Two pretty rooms on the ground floor were given up to his service, and one of the footmen specially appointed to wheel him about in an easy chair from one apartment to the other. Mrs. Bertram declaring she would take him for long drives in her low pony carriage, and that nothing could

offend her so deeply as his returning to the solitude of Blyth Hall.

Now, when all this was settled, when the doctor had come and gone, and Frank Bertram was sitting with his friend, his mother had Muriel all to herself as the two sat over their afternoon tea in the boudoir. The elder lady looked inquiringly at her fair young guest; she smoothed back Muriel's hair from her brow, and kissed her fondly, but still no confidence came. Mrs. Bertram imagined the girl was shy, and tried to encourage her by questions.

"Did you stay under the cedar tree till the bell rang, Muriel?"

"Yes," said the girl, thoughtfully, "and then we came home by the lake. Was not that a lucky chance, or Mr. Stuart might be sitting in the lime walk now without anyone knowing it?"

"Yes, it was very fortunate. You and Frank had a long talk then under the old cedar tree?"

"Yes; we never noticed how the time was going; I was so surprised when the bell rang." This was more hopeful. Mrs. Bertram took courage.

"You cannot think how glad I am, Muriel, that you and Frank understand each other so well."

"Yes; we are very good friends. I like Mr. Bertram, very much."

"Is it always to be Mr. Bertram, Muriel? I think, my dear, now," a stress on the now akin to that Charles Stuart laid on brother, "you should say Frank."

"I don't know," answered the girl, smiling; "he seems so old and wise to me that I don't like to call him Frank."

"But he will wish it, Muriel."

"He didn't say so. Do you know, Mrs. Bertram, he was so kind this morning he has promised that I shall be his little sister and he is to be my big brother. You can't think how glad I am," went on Muriel, slipping one hand into Mrs. Bertram's; "I do love you so much, and if I am his sister, why I must be your child."

Mrs. Bertram kissed her without speaking. Muriel never knew how much of disappointment there was in that caress. The same evening Frank and his mother found themselves alone, she full of her vexation, he thinking most of his friend's accident.

"I am so glad, mother, you pressed Stuart so warmly to remain, it would be awfully lonely for him at home till he can walk about, and you and Muriel will take the best of care of him while I'm away."

"You surely won't go shooting, Frank, now Mr. Stuart is laid aside."

"Why not, mother?" with a hearty laugh. "Charles and I are not on such ceremonious terms that I can't leave him in your charge. What on earth good could I do him by staying? I never nursed anyone in my life."

"It will be so dull for him with only women."

"He likes women better than men; he always did. Besides he'll be well again soon and then he can join me."

Mrs. Bertram did not like the arrangement at all; in fact she had caught at Charles' accident as a chance of detaining her son longer at the Knoll.

"I wonder if you will ever live at home like anyone else, Frank?"

He shook his head.

"Not yet awhile, mother. Don't talk about that, I'm not in the humour for it," irritably.

"I hoped that Muriel——"

The intense melancholy of her voice touched Frank and banished his anger; indeed he laughed outright.

"Oh, mother, did you really think I had not discovered your little scheme. You hoped that Muriel and I should become one. I admire your taste in your selection of a daughter-in-law, and I like Muriel herself immensely, but once for all, mother, I am not a marrying man."

"I did think you would be reasonable some day. What possible fault can you find with Muriel?"

"None at all. She is a charming girl, and will make a charming wife for somebody, only not for me."

"I think you are infatuated."

"Perhaps. But you have been a little blind, mother. Had I asked Muriel Lestrange ever so, she would not have married me."

"Frank!"

"Wait and see."

Frank Bertram devoted most of his time to his invalid friend in the few days that followed, for Mr. Stuart's sofa to be wheeled on to the terrace, and his host and Muriel to sit and talk to him, became quite the order of events, and if Miss Lestrange were kinder and more friendly to Mr. Stuart than she had ever been before, of course the change was due to pity for his misfortune and nothing else.

"Miss Lestrange is making a long visit to the Knoll," remarked Charles to our hero one night after the ladies had retired; "I should think your mother would miss her very much when she goes home."

"My mother had planned not to miss her at all by never letting her go home."

"What do you mean?" sharply.

"Simply this. For the last fifteen years the dear old lady has been busy weaving matrimonial webs for me. Her last plan was that Muriel Lestrange should remain at the Knoll as her daughter-in-law."

"And you?"

"Oh, I declined the arrangement," his eyes fixed purposely on the ground, so as not to meet his friend's gaze. "Muriel is a great deal too good for a crabbed old bachelor like me."

"I can't think what her parents can be like to let her stay away from them so long."

"She hasn't got any, poor child! Her nearest relation is an old Methodist parson and his wife, whom I fancy she hates as cordially as one so gentle can hate anything."

"And they are her guardians?"

"Yes; relations I should decidedly object to myself, but I don't suppose if Muriel marries she will insist on seeing much of them."

"I think if a man really loves a woman," said Charles, gravely, "her family is nothing to him. She leaves them and comes to him."

"What a dreadful democrat you are. I think there is no misery on earth like that of an unequal marriage."

"When the heart and mind are noble the rest matters nothing."

"Whew! You wouldn't object then to a partner who occasionally mutilated the Queen's English?"

"You wilfully misunderstand me, Frank. What I mean is if only my wife were all I wished I shouldn't care a jot about her relations."

"Well, I should. Fancy the heir of the Knoll having a grandfather who stood behind a counter."

"There are worse things than honest trade."

"But we must remember what is due to our name."

"Aristocrat to the backbone! Mark my words, Frank, if ever you do marry you will make a mésalliance. Men who inveigh so bitterly against them always do."

"You are too romantic. How is your new piece getting on?"

"Very well; it will be finished in a day or two."

"Is it for the New Theatre?"

"No; they're going to do 'Twelfth Night' there. 'Olivia' is the part that made Miss Grey."

"Then she will not play in your next piece?"

"No. The heroine is not at all in her line; a lively young lady who flirts a great deal. I don't believe Beatrice Grey can flirt."

"I suppose she will learn some day."

"I doubt it; flirting comes naturally to women; they never learn it. Beatrice takes things too much in earnest to be a coquette. I can't think why you always seem so bitter about her."

"I hate being taken in. I thought she was

a nice, quiet, ladylike sort of girl, and I find she is a public celebrity."

"Ah, well, she has so many admirers she doesn't need your good word. Where are you going on Monday, Frank? Though we've talked so much of our shooting trip I don't believe we ever settled where we were to go."

"Oh, yes, we did; to that shooting-box of mine in Norfolk. You've been there with me before. The preserved ought to be worth shooting over, for they haven't been touched since three years."

"Well, I wish you good sport. I am awfully sorry to fail you. I can't think how I came to sprain my foot. I never did anything so stupid in my life before."

"Well, get to rights as soon as you can and come on to me."

"Agreed; and don't forget you've promised to be my guest at Blyth Hall before Christmas. You've no idea," went on Mr. Stuart, complainingly, "how I dread going back there, it is miserably dull. In my struggling days I used to think how happy I should be if I had a nice little place of my own, but now I can't bear the idea of being stuck up in state at Blyth Hall with the peacock for my sole companion."

"I thought it one of the prettiest places I had met with. Don't cry down your own property, old fellow, you'll have plenty to do, and besides, I shall be down before Christmas and share with the peacock the pleasure of your company."

"Mind you do."

"Besides, there's your play coming out; is not that enough to enliven you? particularly if it succeeds like 'Mona Graeme'?"

"'Mona Graeme' was sheer luck. I can't expect to do as well again. They opened at Liverpool with it this week, and had crowded houses."

Two days later Frank Bertram set out on his journey to the little shooting-box near Norwich. Either he must have changed his mind as to his destination directly he left the Knoll, or else he must have held peculiar ideas of the route from Downshire to Norfolk, for the first evening after his departure from home saw him in a private box at the Imperial Theatre, Liverpool.

CHAPTER XII.

UNCONSCIOUS LOVE.

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough how their ends we will. SHAKESPEARE.

BEATRICE GREY had found the last week of her sojourn in London quiet in the extreme. True, *Mona Graeme* was as great a success as ever. The New Theatre was crowded nightly, but from the moment she saw the disappointed surprise in Frank Bertram's dark eyes, there had come to her a strange sense of weariness. From that night to the moment of her leaving town, she had waited in feverish eagerness for him to call. Why or wherefore she could not have explained, but she had an eager wish to justify herself in this man's eyes, to tell him the reason which sent her on the stage.

She forgot he had no right to question her conduct, possibly no interest in her fate, she felt only he had misjudged her, and that at any cost she would fain right herself in his sight.

Only once did she leave Myrtle Villa in the daytime between his last visit and her own departure, that one absence made her miss seeing Charles Stuart, but at this she was almost relieved. True friend though the author was, she had begun to dread meeting him from simple uncertainty whether she should mention his friend's name.

When the last day had come, when she was actually on her journey, a blank sense of disappointment seized her. Her very heart seemed sore. Something had drawn her towards Frank Bertram as towards no one else.

She thought him brave, true, staunch, and honourable. She believed he had felt a friend's interest in her, and now he had forsaken her, had condemned her unheard on discovering that she appeared nightly before the public for

money. It seemed to Beatrice that for her to like anything seemed fatal. Whatever she truly prized slipped from her grasp.

Through all those summer weeks that Bertram spent in pleasant loitering at the Knoll, the beautiful young actress did not forget him as she journeyed from one large town to another, delighting all her audiences as *Mona Gräme*.

His image rose up often before her. She wondered if he was at home with the mother who loved him so, and whether the Muriel who could not be his friend was becoming something dearer.

And then after weeks of silence, weeks of suspense, one day as she was crossing the corridor of her hotel to go to her own room, she met him face to face. In the surprise of the moment the actress was forgotten in the woman. Beatrice started, blushed, then grew pale.

"I did not expect to see you here, Mr. Bertram."

"I have been here three days, and have seen you each night at the theatre, but I had no idea you were in this hotel."

He still held her hand, and until he released it, she was obliged to stand there with his eyes looking into her own.

"Is Mrs. Stone here?" he asked. "May I come and see you?"

"This is our sitting-room," said Beatrice, simply, indicating the apartment she had just left. "I am sure Mrs. Stone will be very pleased to see you."

And then she escaped. Mr. Bertram was warmly received by the widow, who was only too delighted to get a fresh listener to her complaints of Liverpool, and longings to get back to London. She was in the midst of her troubles when Beatrice returned.

Somehow things did not go quite as they did at Kilburn. To-day it was Mrs. Stone who led the conversation, and the other two followed. Only once did Bertram start a topic.

"Do you know you are not looking at all well?" he said, gently, to Beatrice.

"I am afraid that accident upset you more than we suspected at the time?"

"Oh, no," she answered, cheerfully, "I am quite well, but I think all this travelling does not suit me; I shall be glad when we are back in town. Do you know?" she asked him, later on, when Mrs. Stone had left the room on some hospitable intent of summoning the waiter to bring an impromptu tea, "I thought I should never see you again?"

"Why?"

"I saw you at the New Theatre, and I thought you were disappointed."

"Not disappointed," he said, warmly, "but unutterably surprised. I had no idea you were an actress."

"Until that night," answered Beatrice, "I took it for granted you knew of my profession, or I should have told you."

"Do you like this life?" he asked, abruptly.

"In part, yes."

"I wonder your friends ever let you go on the stage."

"I had none," she answered, gently; "save for my little sister I was alone in the world. I wanted to make a home for her. I knew it was a grudging welcome that my uncle gave her. How else was I to get money? I must have toiled for years as a governess before I could have had Muriel. I went on the stage—and success came too late."

After that Frank Bertram gave himself up to the charm of Beatrice's presence. He never thought of his scruples; of his prejudices against actresses. His mother; his old name; all his preconceived ideas of matrimony vanished. He only knew that the world held for him but one woman, Beatrice Grey, and if she would not share his life with him, he cared very little for that life itself.

Can you realise what this love was? The wealth of heart that had never been filled with a woman's image before. It was an intense, passionate, jealous love; not tender or unselfish, but yet with much that was noble in it; deep,

unwavering, steadfast. Whether she married him, whether she deceived him, whether she forsook him for all time, Frank would love Beatrice.

He never wrote to the Knoll of his change of plans. He kept his secret jealously. Mrs. Bertram and Charles Stuart sent their letters to the shooting-box in Norfolk, and Mr. Bertram took care that the housekeeper there knew his movements, so that after all his correspondence reached him only one day late. If the housekeeper had been curious her master's directions must have amazed her, for his wanderings were numerous.

He followed M. Ashley's "*Mona Gräme*" Company as persistently as if he had belonged to it. He went to the theatre every night and called on Miss Grey two or three times a week. In those days he called himself her "friend." He was never happy out of her sight. He never spoke one word of love to her, and when away from the fascination of her presence often asked himself, bitterly, how it was to end?

There was no gossip about their intimacy. Beatrice was too respected to be lightly spoken of. There was no jealous rival to talk scandal of her; the only two other actresses who appeared in "*Mona Gräme*" had each a husband of their own, and, strange to say, wanted no one else's attentions.

So the time passed. There was no one to open Beatrice's eyes. She was happy. Life seemed like a beautiful poem to her; the days like a sweet dream. Mr. Ashley, her best adviser, was not won the company; he was at his London house on a sick bed, and although the reports of his progress were good, there was no chance of his seeing Beatrice until her return to town. The stage manager, the very man who played Robert Deane, and as such had once incurred Frank's jealousy, never interfered with the private affairs of the company, and Mrs. Stone, if she thought anything, was not sufficiently at home with her young companion to put her thoughts into words, and so the summer faded, and in October Beatrice went home to Myrtle Villa.

It often seemed to Miss Grey afterwards that those first days of her return to London were the happiest in her whole life. As yet she was unconscious of the nature of her interest in Frank Bertram, and unsuspecting of the love he bore her, she knew not that her heart had awoke never to slumber again. She only felt that life was sweet and she was happy.

For three weeks after she returned to Kilburn there were no performances at the New Theatre. Early in November she was to appear there in the character which had first made her famous. Till then, save for one rehearsal, her time was her own, and she revelled in it.

Frank Bertram was staying at the Charing Cross Hotel, and nearly every day found him at Myrtle Villa, yet often as he came there he never presented himself without an excuse. Now it was some new book or poem he had brought for Miss Grey, or he had called to take her and Mrs. Stone to a concert or private display of pictures. There was nothing the most prudish chaperone could have cavilled at in his intercourse with Beatrice, yet Mrs. Stone felt uneasy, like Bertram himself, she began to wonder "How is it to end?"

(To be Continued.)

GESE-CRAMMING.

GESE-CRAMMING, with a view to the ultimate manufacture of *pâté de foie gras*, is on the increase, and it is said that there are 250 people engaged in the business at Strasbourg, in which city this strange branch of industry has thrived for more than a century. Everyone knows that the process of inducing an unnatural enlargement of the bird's liver is one that entails considerable suffering upon the goose. The average amount of food required to bring each bird to the proper point of perfection, or rather of disease, is estimated at 30lbs.

The chief point in view is the development of the liver at the expense of the rest of the economy, and to this end antimony is added to the solid food, and fine gravel and vegetable charcoal to the water. The value of a goose is increased four-fold and six-fold by this method, for while the flesh of the bird is worth but about 7d. a pound at the best of times, the same weight of the liver will sell for as much as 5s. or even 10s.

The manufacture of the famous *Strasbourg pâté de foie gras* lies at present in the hands of twenty-three persons, whose joint yearly income from this source is returned as £75,000, besides which the flesh and fat of the geese which yield the required amount of liver realises a further sum of £20,000.

SCIENCE.

THE small number of nights in the year which can be utilised for the best work with the telescope, may be appreciated from the following statement in the recently published annual report of Mr. Ellery, the astronomer of the government observatory at Melbourne, Australia. "Out of 326 available nights," he says, "150 were unfitted for observation from unfavourable weather, bright moonlight interfered on 32, while 49 were occupied with visitors, which together with about 20 nights during which the telescope was under repair, or which were unavailable from other causes, left only 75 nights upon which observations could be made." The telescope at Melbourne is a large reflector, excellently adapted for the study of the nebulae in the southern heavens, and with its aid an admirable series of drawings of these starry cloudlets has been made. Strangely enough, however, the newly-discovered moons of Mars could not be found with this fine instrument, although they were readily observed with refractory telescopes of much smaller dimensions. Mr. Ellery mentions that some of the smaller nebulae catalogued by Sir John Herschel have so changed in form that they can be identified only by their positions.

IT is well known that the native porters employed to carry goods over the mountain passes in Peru strengthen themselves for their work by chewing the stimulating leaves of the coca. This habit furnishes them with an easy means of measuring time and distance. The effect of the leaves is not felt until about ten minutes after they have been placed in the mouth. Then the chewer becomes conscious of the stimulating action, which continues about forty minutes, when it begins to decline unless more of the coca is taken. There is thus a period of about fifty minutes between the time when a dose is taken and the time when its effect begins to wear off. During this period a native carrier can walk three Kilometres up hill. These facts were observed by Dr. A. Bastian, of Berlin, on a recent journey in South America in search of antiquities.

THE well-known theory that the oscillations of the magnetic needle vary in average range according to the increase and decrease of the number of spots on the sun, is rejected by the Astronomer Royal in England and by the President of the Academy of Sciences in France. Notwithstanding the general acceptance of the doctrine by physicists, there is a difficulty in the fact that a complete cycle of magnetic change has an average duration of 10 to 45-100 years, while the sunspot period appears to be 11 and 11-100 years long. Since it has recently been maintained that sunspots influence not only the number of wrecks in each year and the quantity of grain raised, but also the occurrence of commercial crises, it may be well thus to note that the theory of a connection between the earth's magnetism and the solar spots, which is far better supported by proof, still remains open to doubt.

SALICYLIC acid is now extensively used in Europe by brewers, who introduce it into their beers to prevent secondary fermentation, a pro-

cess which has long been recognised as injurious to the quality of the beverage. The acid, if employed in proper proportions, checks the fermentation without destroying any of the ordinary constituents of the beer, and apparently without affecting it so as to occasion any harmful results to the consumer. It is too soon, however, to be certain that this use of salicylic acid is not deleterious to health, although some such observations as have thus far been made on the subject tend to that conclusion. The anti-fermenting properties of the acid were discovered about four years ago by Professor Kolbe, of Leipzig.

ONE of the largest and most perfect aquaria ever designed is in course of construction at Aston, near Birmingham. The sea-water for this aquaria will be made on the spot instead of being brought from the ocean, but the process to be employed will furnish water of precisely the same composition as that of the sea itself. The method of preparation was devised by Mr. W. A. Lloyd, a naturalist who has long been most creditably identified with the management of aquaria. About 360,000 gallons of water in all, including the fresh water, will be required for this new establishment at Aston, and no change or renewal is expected to be necessary, as the purity will be maintained by chemical means.

THE present prevalence of diphtheria gives special interest to two facts mentioned by the "Lancet" in its review of the progress of medicine in 1878. One is the probability, established by the researches of Dr. Thorne Thorne, that diphtheria is often related to previous prevalent and apparently simple sore throat in the locality of the outbreak. The other is proof by Mr. W. H. Power, of the Local Government Board, that one particular outbreak of diphtheria was due to the diffusion of the disease through the milk supply. It is still more remarkable that there should be some evidence in the latter case tending to show that the cow was the source of infection; yet such is stated to be the fact.

THE superintendent electrician of the government of India has recommended the adoption of the electric light for use at the principal stations of the East Indian Railway. A trial will accordingly soon be made, probably at Allahabad or Howrah, with what is called the Serrin lamp, operated by a Siemens dynamo-electric machine. It is said that this apparatus yields a light strongly resembling daylight; but its cost seems great, for we are told that an engine of twenty-five horse power will be required to maintain the four lamps needed for a large station.

THE "Talisman" is not a book, but a bracelet, introduced by Mr. Streeter, the well-known jeweller of Bond Street; it is of varied and handsome design. The idea is quite an original one, the bracelet consisting of a complete circle, without fastening of any kind; it is made of 18-carat gold, and is so elastic as to admit of its being drawn over the hand and then fitting closely to the wrist. This bracelet was largely patronised by the haut ton present at the recent auspicious Royal marriage.

A MISSOURI editor printed two column editorial on the Best Breed of Hogs and a contemporary took him to task for devoting so much space to his family affairs,

THOSE newspaper editors who are too proud or too obstinate to retract any unjust or improper language which they have admitted to their columns should profit by the example of an editor who gives notice as follows: "If any subscriber finds a line in his paper that he does not like and cannot agree with, if he will bring his paper to the office and point out the offending line, the editor will take his scissors and cut it out for him."

EDISON is working on an infernal machine to regulate the man who is careful to shut the door after him all summer, and invariably leaves it wide open just as soon as the mercury touches freezing point.

FRINGED WITH FIRE.

By the Author of "Bound to the Trawl," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE VERES.

MEANWHILE Lord Rookford having reached London, began to feel as though he could breathe freely again. Not that the metropolis in the month of June is exactly the place that one would choose for fresh air, but there are certain social and moral discomforts which seem to make one gasp for breath to give one strength to throw them off, and at such times the intoxicating sense of freedom which pervades the very atmosphere of London is, to many, far preferable to the finest scenery and the most breezy moorland.

This was the case with Viscount Rookford, and thus it was that having dressed and dined he betook himself to the "Fantastic," a small but fashionable theatre, where Miss Rosalind Vere, a danseuse, was the principal star.

He had his own box which had been engaged for the season, and he sauntered into it, and screening himself with the curtain, took a rapid view of the house.

Hot as the weather was, the theatre was full from stalls to gallery, but the ballet had not yet commenced, and he seated himself in a corner waiting for the curtain to rise.

A burst of applause roused him from the fit of abstraction into which he had fallen, and looking up, he saw Rosalind bowing to the audience.

How his heart leapt, how his pulses throbbed, till his temples ached with suppressed feeling, and how he hated every man who looked upon the woman he himself coveted. The bursts and shouts of applause which showed that hundreds of other people admired her as well as he made him almost beside himself with jealousy.

It was not an ordinary ballet, nor was the girl who was the central figure in it an ordinary dancer, for there was grace and beauty in her every movement, it was the measured rhythm and poetry of motion that her dancing gave expression to, while her wonderful and lovely figure added in no slight degree to the charm of her every action.

With a long deep drawn sigh of enjoyment that in its intensity almost amounted to pain, the spectators watched her, and whenever she paused in the dance, they expressed their appreciation in a long and deafening round of applause.

Wonderfully like Clara Cousins was this girl who danced partly to please the public, but more especially to earn her daily bread and help to maintain those to whom she belonged.

There was the same bright childish face, the same sparkling black eyes, the same dark wavy curly hair, the same pink and white complexion, the same height and shape of form and feature; even the same tricks of manner which were characteristic of Florence Edgecombe's friend were reproduced in Rosalind.

And yet there was a difference that would have been recognised had they stood together side by side, more readily than it could be when they were seen apart.

In the dancer's face there was indicated some knowledge of the world, of the good and of the evil of life, a certain keen perception of the market value of everything and of everybody, of the very thoughts and feelings which she excited in others, and that she indulged in or suffered herself, also there was a vein of poetry in her nature which Clara Cousins did not possess; there was moreover an absence of refinement about the danseuse, in which quality the physician's daughter was in no way deficient.

One was an uncut diamond, the other was cut and polished, but the stone which had gone through the lapidary's hand had never possessed the natural depth of fire and brilliancy that

glowed in the rougher gem, and art could not develop what nature had failed to provide.

Beyond this, the two girls were as singularly like each other as the reflection in a glass is to the person whose face is reflected, and Rookford, as he watched the dancer and took note of her startling likeness to the girl whom he had spoken to the previous morning, wondered more than ever at this strange resemblance, for which he could imagine no satisfactory reason.

As soon as Rosalind had left the stage, he made his way to the green-room, where he found a pinched, shrivelled old man whom he addressed as Mr. Vere.

"How d'ye do, my lord; glad to see you in town again, my lord; what did you think of my Rosie, to-night? Lovely, wasn't she; she elevates the Terpsichorean profession to a level with the fine arts, doesn't she? Ah, here she comes; not a word before her, my lord, we mustn't make her vain; we spoil her if we do—spoil her. Now, my Rosie, ready to come home to the bosom of your family?"

"Do be sensible, papa; how do you do, Lord Rookford?" with a somewhat distant bow; "isn't this place stifling? I think the weather grows hotter and hotter every day. Come along, papa. Good-night, my lord."

And with a proud sweep of her by no means tall figure she was passing on when the young man, stepping to her side, asked:

"Miss Vere, may I be allowed to call upon you to-morrow morning? I have something to say to you that I cannot speak here."

The girl opened her eyes wider than usual, for she was unfeignedly surprised, but she said coolly:

"I really don't know whether mamma will receive you or not, but you can try, or, there is the post, you can write to her, but I never receive visitors, as I think you know. Good night once more, my lord," and with another proud bend she was gone.

"What is that? What did he want?" asked the little man at her side, sharply. "I saw him speak to you; hide nothing; remember you have two years to serve, two years, and we would not have you do anything to make us ashamed."

"I object to be spoken to like this, father," was the haughty, almost imperious reply. "When I do ought to make you ashamed it will be time to speak, but let us get home; I am hungry."

"But what said the young lord, and what replied you," persisted the man. "I would know—I would know."

Very briefly the girl told him.

"Ah, you are right; good girl, good girl," he said, patting her hand approvingly as they walked out into the cool streets and turned towards their home. "Let him call, let him call; Madame Vere will receive him. Ah, I am not jealous, not in the least."

Rosalind made no reply until they got into St. James's Park, then she spoke again.

"I am so tired of my life," she said wearily; "I do so hate making a show of myself as I have to do every night; how is it, papa? Why did you make me a dancer? Was there nothing else I was fit for; I would rather do a housemaid's work, or sweep a crossing, than lead the life I do."

"You are tired, my child, or you would not talk in this ungrateful strain. Are you not at the head of your profession? Have you not all you can desire to make you happy? What more do you want? Tell your father, love, and it shall be yours."

"What do I want?" passionately, "to be like other women, to be able to hide myself in a quiet home; to be like Emma or Susan, household drudges if you like, but not stuck upon a public stage for everybody to point at. I'd work like a slave, father, if I could be sure I should never have to dance again."

"Bah! How absurd you are," impatiently. "How are you to work; you know not how to do it, and who would pay you for work such as you ask for. You make fifteen pounds every week by dancing, and you would not make fifteen shillings, work you ever so hard, at any-

tining else, and after the sacrifices I have made and the money you have cost; bah, you are ungrateful, my daughter!"

"I don't know that I have much to be grateful for," bitterly. "I may earn the money, but you save or spend it; it won't last much longer, however; I shall get away from this life in some way or other, how I scarcely know, and I don't much care so that it is done."

There was a tone of recklessness in her words that alarmed the little man, and he exclaimed, with anxious eagerness:

"What! you will ruin me! me and my family. You will not dance; you will bring us to want; ungrateful, wicked; is it for this that I have nursed and cherished you like a child of my own? You will sting the breast that gave to you warmth and the hand that led you to become what you are; it is the young lord who has turned your head; but I will defeat you. I will make you dance always; make you! make you, I say; do you hear?"

The girl listened to this angry torrent of words, only one expression striking her attention and filling her thoughts to the exclusion of every other thing that was said.

"Like a child of your own?" she repeated. "Am I not a child of your own? What do you mean?"

"Nothing, nothing, my dear; I was angry; you do vex me; you are not obedient like the children of my own country. You do turn after your mother. We will say no more about it; you are tired and cross, and I, I am not amiable. We will have our petit souper, then we will be ourselves once more."

"But what did you mean? Am I not your daughter? I have often thought it strange that I should be; and is not madame my stepmother? Tell me; if this is so to whom do I belong?"

"It is nonsense, my dear. You are my child; to whom else should you belong? Who could love you so much or take care of you as I have done? Now, we are near our home, say nothing to madame; it pains her to think we do quarrel."

By this time they had left the park, and had walked up Buckingham Palace Road, beyond Victoria Station, and paused before a gate which led up through a small strip of garden to a good-sized house.

The girl followed the man in and closed the garden gate after them. She did not pursue the subject of their conversation. She knew that the remark had been a slip of the tongue—all the more reason therefore why it might be true—but she also knew her companion too well to expect to gain anything by cross-questioning him; if he was to be led to betray himself it must be when he was off his guard, and that assuredly would not be again to-night.

The little man opened the door with a latch-key, and Rosalind, all the elasticity gone from her form and bearing, walked slowly into the house, and entering the back dining-room threw herself limply into a chair.

"I am so tired," she said, wearily, pulling off her hat and throwing it upon a couch by her side; "but this is cool and refreshing," and she breathed a sigh of intense satisfaction.

Not without cause. The room though small was lightly and elegantly furnished. The table was laid for supper, and the carefully shaded lamp was far too dim to detract from the beauty of the moonlight shining upon the garden, which the widely opened French windows seemed to make part of the room. No curious neighbours could overlook this pretty scene, for high trees and creepers fenced it in on every side, and to all intents and purposes the back portion of this house was as pleasant as though it had been a dozen miles away from the sound of ever-passing wheels or the wild shrieks of railway whistles.

The little old man had left the room; the girl was alone, indulging in waking dreams that were not altogether unpleasant, when the door opened and a woman came in, who, seeing the half-recumbent figure, said, tenderly:

"Tired, my dear?"

"Yes, mamma, and so hungry and thirsty; do give me some claret and water, and tell them

to make haste with the supper. I don't know when I have felt the fatigue as I have done to-night."

"You should not have walked home, Rosie; it was too much for you."

"No, it was not that. I felt stifled. I think I should have fainted if I had not been able to get out into the night air. It is strange," she added, as though thinking aloud, "but I seem to hate my profession every day more and more intensely."

"Madame Vere," as her husband insisted upon calling her—made no reply. In her heart she quite sympathised with the girl's feelings, but she dared not say so, fear as well as interest closed her lips, and she now went to hasten the tardy supper.

Ten minutes later and the family party had seated themselves round the table, and Rosalind was disposing of a cutlet with much celerity, not to say enjoyment. A strange party they were too. The shade having been taken off the lamp their faces were now visible.

First there was Mr. Vere, short, thin, wizened; an Irishman by birth, a Frenchman by education and by inclination, who had, many years previously, changed the plebeian name of Maloney for the more aristocratic cognomen of Vere. Looking at his watery grey eyes and restless manner you see that he is greedy and morbidly suspicious, and a man who will exact much from others, giving the very smallest possible amount of anything in return.

In point of fact Mr. Vere had been a social and moral failure. After spending his own money, and getting involved in some very shady transactions through fingerings what belonged to other people, he had now renounced "city" work, and had comfortably settled down to live upon the earnings of his wife and children.

Opposite him sat Mrs. Vere, tall, thin, and worn-looking, with a complexion that was still clear and fresh, and with bright brown hair that was almost sandy in colour. She had formerly been a fine and handsome-looking woman; a lady by birth and education, but she was one who had suffered much; and ill-health, pecuniary troubles and the difficulties that her husband was always getting into had taken much of the life and energy out of her, and greatly impaired the dignity and beauty that had once been natural to her. She was Mr. Vere's second wife, and only the mother of one of his children, the youngest of the party at the table.

By his first wife Mr. Vere professed to have had three children; a son named Victor, who held a commission in the French navy, in Algiers; Rosalind, the danseuse, and Emma, who was about eighteen and as heavy and plain and clumsy as any Dutch dairymaid.

With the exception of Victor, the whole family was present, but a stranger looking in, might have observed that no servant put in an appearance, and that the serving and waiting was performed by the two younger girls and their mother. The cause of this was that one old Frenchwoman who could not speak a syllable of English, and who positively declined to learn the obnoxious language, was the only domestic they possessed, and thus Rosalind's remark about her sisters being household drudges, was not very far from the truth.

Supper was over at last, and the cloth was removed. It was noteworthy that the two younger girls seemed to look after Rosalind's comfort prior to their own, not that she looked for or exacted such attention, but it appeared to be hers by right as the eldest daughter, and it was yielded by them and accepted by her as a matter of course. Mr. Vere himself treated her with much consideration, for these are not the days when a daughter can be made by harsh measures to bend to parental authority, when it would drive her in a direction contrary to her own inclinations. No, severity there may be, but it must be tempered with kindness and good judgment, thus enforcing a kind of moral suasion, far more efficacious with refractory children than overbearing tyranny would be;

and kindness makes the bonds that bind them tighter, because affection as well as interest seems to rivet them.

Mr. Vere when he rose from table lighted a cigarette and invited his wife and Rosalind to take a turn in the garden with him, while Emma and Susan attended to their domestic duties.

But Rosalind was tired, so after a word or two with Emma she said good night to them all and went off to bed.

Like an obedient wife—if not a wise one—Mrs. Vere accompanied her lord into the garden, dreading the night dews all the time and quite sure that the next day she would have a terrible attack of neuralgia.

"She is getting restless," said the little man after they had paced along the soft grass for a few minutes in silence: "she declares she will leave the stage; if she does we shall be ruined."

"I don't see why," in an aggrieved tone; "we are very economical; we all work hard—that is, the girls and I do—and Monsieur de Vitre more than pays the rent. What have you done with all the money Rosalind has earned this year?"

"What have I done with it? Do you not spend it? Do you not eat it all up? All of it? all?"

"No, we do not, and you know it. You have been gambling again I believe, and you will ruin us as you have ruined us over and over again; I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself to make your daughter go on the stage as a public dancer to enable you to indulge in your besetting vice. I can quite understand the poor girl shrinking from the public exhibition of herself as she does. I would rather see her in her grave if she were a child of mine."

"But she is not a child of yours, madame, and you are my wife, and you will obey me. Say, will you or will you not?"

"If it is anything that my conscience does not tell me it is wrong to do I will obey you."

"Your conscience; bah! that for your conscience," and he inserted his thumb nail under his front teeth, and then threw his hand outwards with a gesture of inexpressible contempt: "Listen."

"Yes," meekly.

"That young Milord Rookford will be here tomorrow; he will come to see you. Be civil to him; listen to him; do not let him see Rosie, but offend him not on any account; it is such as he who takes boxes for the season wherever she is engaged, and who keeps up her fame, and raise her salary, do you see?"

"Yes," reluctantly; "but what is he coming for? He has been before and was told Rosalind was not at home; does he want to marry her?"

"Marry her?" with contempt. "Does he want to marry you?"

"Vere"—it was his Christian as well as his surname—"do you mean to tell me you have sunk so low as to allow a man with base intentions to come here after your own daughter, and to ask me, your wife, to receive and encourage him? Can you really be such a mean, despicable villain?"

The timid, shrinking woman was roused at last. She would have borne any indignity offered to herself meekly, if with sorrow; but that Rosalind, whom she loved—who had always treated her with the respect and affection of a dutiful child—should be exposed to insult that her own father had contrived at, was too much for this down-trodden woman, and she now turned upon the man as only weak creatures driven to bay can turn.

Mr. Vere was both astonished and cowed. Although he was a small tyrant in his way he knew very well that if the women of his household banded together against him he would not have either a comfortable or an easy time of it, and he now said, in a deprecatory manner:

"Why should you fly out at me like this? I don't know what the young man is coming for, and," as though that were an excuse for everything, "she is not my daughter."

"Not your daughter?" incredulously. "No; but never tell her so, or she will cast off all restraint, and go her own way; I almost betrayed the secret to her myself to-night. Be

you cautious. I am foolish to tell you this; be silent or I will go hang myself."

But his words fell upon deaf ears, for the woman said in an angry tone:

"Have I been your wife for seventeen years, and have you kept this secret from me all this while to tell it now? I won't believe it. I am sure it is false; I have even seen the certificate of her birth. How dare you think to dupe me like this?"

"Sacré, will you speak lower; listen," and he whispered some hurried sentences in her ear.

"Poor Rosie," said the woman, pitifully, when he had finished; "but no," she added a second later, "lucky Rosie; we should always have been a burden round her neck, and now she can be free of us—free!"

The face of the little man became livid with passion as he heard these words, and he caught his wife by the arm so savagely that she uttered a cry of pain.

But he did not relax his hold, and he hissed with suppressed fury:

"I told you this, that you should help me, not that you should work against me; promise to do so, or by the Lord that made us, I'll have your life, and hang myself afterwards."

The woman laughed aloud; she was throwing off the bondage of years, and let the consequences be what it would, the sensation was pleasant, and she now said, coldly:

"Vere Maloney, if you threaten me like this again I will take you before the magistrate and bind you over to keep the peace, and now I shall do as my conscience dictates; you will gamble with no more of Rosalind's money."

With which, disregarding his entreaties, she walked into the house and spent the rest of the night with her own daughter.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

Rosalind usually breakfasted in bed when she had been to the theatre the previous night, and this morning Mrs. Vere herself brought the tray with its white napkin and tempting delicacies to the girl's bedside.

"Oh, mamma, why did you do it? One of the girls could have brought it up; and you have not had your own breakfast, have you?"

"No; I will have a cup of coffee with you. See what a lovely bouquet of flowers has just been left for you; but you have been sleeping with the window wide open."

"Yes, I always do so in the summer. I suppose Lord Rookford sent those flowers."

With a faint blush she added, impulsively:

"Oh, mother, I do wish I had been born a lady. I ought to have been," she added, with a laugh; "for all my tastes are above my station, but that I suppose is a very common failing."

"I am afraid it is, my dear. This Lord Rookford is one of your many admirers, my dear?"

"Yes; and he is coming here to-day, mamma. I wish you would see him. I told him perhaps you would, but that I could not; and mamma," with a troubled blush, "don't let him hint even at anything that isn't quite nice; but just let him feel that if we are poor and humble in comparison with himself, we are not people to be insulted. He has always treated me with much delicacy and respect, so that I can't help liking him. You understand, mamma, don't you?"

"Quite, my dear. Unless he comes to lay his hand and ancestral acres at your feet—that is the melodramatic expression, isn't it?—he may save himself the trouble of coming again. But suppose he does?"

"Suppose the Queen were to pay me a visit this morning, mamma?"

"Well, no; my imagination won't soar to that height; but I can suppose a man even in Lord Rookford's position wanting to marry you."

"Then I can't, so we won't speculate upon it. I was not born under a lucky star, mamma,

and that would be such a piece of wonderful good fortune that I should go to sleep for a week on purpose to dream about it. But what has become of papa? Is he eating his breakfast alone?"

"I suppose so, unless he has gone out. We had a quarrel last night after you went to bed, and I have not seen him since. It was about you."

"About me!" in surprise. "I remember he said some very strange things to me in the park on our way home. I wish he hadn't gone to the theatre every night; a lot of men there treat him to champagne, and it struck me last night that he had taken more than was good for him."

"No doubt he had. I have been thinking, Rosalind, that it would do quite as well if I went with you every time instead of letting him do so; what do you think?"

"I should like it ever so much better, mamma, but you don't know how wearying it would be for you."

"Oh, I don't mind that, and your papa wouldn't have the excuse he now has for being so idle and not attempting any kind of work; and also, Rosie, you must not let him take your money every week. He doesn't save it as he tells us he does, but he gambles it away."

"Good gracious! and I thought I was working to make some little provision for you both in case I went away or got married. That is the only consideration that has reconciled me to my unpleasant work."

"Yes, but it is just like your father. You had better draw the money yourself in future; give me a little for housekeeping and put the rest away safely; it will be the only chance of our keeping a house over our heads."

"But I very much doubt if papa will let me do it; he is a party to the agreement with the manager binding me for three years to dance in London and the provinces. It was only last night he taunted me with the assertion that I could not leave the stage."

"If you won't dance unless the manager pays you personally he will be very glad to do so," said Mrs. Vere, shrewdly.

"Yes, I suppose he would; but I must get down to rehearsal soon. If you come with me we will speak to Mr. Newton himself and tell him how matters stand. But won't papa be in a rage?"

"He has been in one already; look at my arm. He did that last night."

And she pulled up her sleeve, showing two large bruises upon her arm. Rosalind's eyes flashed, and she said with intense feeling:

"I hope no man will ever treat me in such a manner. But," she added, a second later, "papa has changed greatly of late; he even implied last evening that I am not his daughter."

"Just as he will be saying I am not his wife soon," was the evasive reply; though she added impulsively: "I often wish to heaven I was not; marriage with me has only been another name for slavery."

"You seem like a very rebellious slave at present," laughed her step-daughter, "but I must get up now. Dress yourself nicely, mamma, and ask Emma if my bath is ready; I won't keep you waiting, and we shall be back before two."

Mrs. Vere assented and left the room. She was rather frightened at what she had begun to do, but she was resolved to pursue the course she had marked out for herself. Her husband's communication the night before had shocked her, but it had also armed her with a weapon which she knew well how to use.

First, and above everything else, she had a great affection for Rosalind, and she knew that the girl fully reciprocated the feeling; besides, she was the bread winner of the family, and though it had always seemed natural to every member of it—that what one did the others should benefit by—yet a sense of wrong and injustice had come over the women the moment

Mrs. Vere discovered—which she did only the day before—that her husband was using Rosalind's hard-earned income to indulge in his old

vice of gambling which had previously brought them to poverty.

So Mr. Vere was to have the supplies stopped, and Mr. Vere was not the man to bear such an inconvenience quietly.

"Dear me, how late that girl is."

It was the little man himself who spoke, and he looked at his watch, compared it with the timepiece, then rang the bell furiously, for he had been reading the newspaper and nursing his wrath till the morning had slipped away and it was close upon one o'clock.

"Where is Miss Rosalind? Ask her if she knows what time it is?" he said to the old Frenchwoman in her native tongue, for it was she who had answered his summons.

"The young ladies are out; so is madame," was the placid reply.

"Out? Where are they gone? When will they be back?" was the next demand.

"The dinner is to be ready at two o'clock said the old woman.

With a nod, Mr. Vere dismissed her, then sat down with his head in his hands to think. His wife had not been near him since she left his side in the garden the night before; his two younger daughters had breakfasted with him almost in silence, then he had strolled into the garden, which was so exquisitely pretty, had smoked a great number of cigarettes and read his newspapers, believing the world to be the same world as it was yesterday, and lo! while he had been basking in the sunshine and sleeping, the source of his enjoyment had slipped from him.

Not that he realises this as yet, but he feels that he has been slighted and neglected, and he is annoyed and angry, and more than that, he is in a slight difficulty.

He is short of money; he intended to have asked the treasurer at the theatre to advance him part of his daughter's salary, and now the opportunity would not occur till the evening or the next day, and as this delay would interfere with the pursuit of his favourite vice, he felt irritated and injured accordingly.

While he was thus thinking, his two younger daughters returned, and very shortly afterwards Mrs. Vere and Rosalind joined them.

"Upon my word you've played me a nice trick!" he exclaimed, as the last arrivals came into the room. "Here had I important business to attend to, and I have been kept in all the morning waiting for you."

"That is a pity, papa," replied Rosalind, calmly, "but I shall not let my work interfere with your business in future; they ought to pay double," with a laugh, "if they are going to take up your time as well as mine."

"But you don't think I am going to allow you to go to a theatre alone, do you?" with virtuous indignation.

"Oh, no; mamma will go with me; her time is not so valuable as yours, you know. She went this morning and found it was by no means as bad as she had imagined; didn't you, dear?"

A quiet assent from Mrs. Vere, who had as yet taken no direct notice of her husband.

The little man's feelings were of a very complex character, and his first sensation was that of relief, for it certainly was a great tax upon his time and temper to have to dance attendance twice a day upon Rosalind, while it was quite certain she could not go unprotected.

If his wife would take this duty off his hands well and good—that was provided he could still receive the girl's salary—that, of course, he was quite determined to do, for upon the subject of money he had never been so comfortable in his life before.

Fifteen pounds every Saturday was a very comfortable sum for a gentleman whose rent was paid for him to receive, and though it is true there were some calls upon it for house-keeping and dress; still the bulk remained, and he found an intense satisfaction in spending it.

He dared not ask any questions now lest it should put ideas of getting it for themselves into the women's heads, and, under the circumstances, he scarcely liked to go to the theatre to solicit an advance before pay-day came.

By the time he had eaten his dinner, how-



[A DOUBTFUL FATHER.]

ever, he had put the last scruple aside, and, putting on his hat in what he considered a fascinating manner, drawing on a pair of lavender kid gloves and taking a small, gold-headed cane in his hand, for he was something of a dandy in his way, he started off to walk leisurely to the "Fantastic," meaning to take a turn in the Row on his way back.

Scarcely had he turned the corner of the street than a park phaeton, drawn by a splendid pair of bays, was pulled up there, and a young man, giving the reins to the groom, alighted, ordered the man where to drive, and proceeded the rest of the distance to the place he was going on foot.

This was Lord Rookford; a feeling of delicacy kept him from driving up to Rosalind Vere's door in a manner that would attract attention. Though he came with so much to offer, and had, to all outward appearances, so little to gain, yet his heart beat anxiously with mingled hope and fear as he entered the iron gate and walked up to the door.

Yet a very goodly man to look upon was the Earl of Craystorth's son. There was an air of distinction about him in London that was not so strongly marked at Wardour Hall; perhaps this was because the people about him at Wardour were not so very different in station to himself. And his fine, frank, handsome face, his waving chestnut hair and his clear, bright blue eyes were charming enough to win the heart of any woman. So, at least, Susan Vere thought as she opened the door to him, and she wished—not for the first time in her life—that she was half as pretty and attractive as her sister Rosalind.

"Yes, Mrs. Vere is at home," she replied, in answer to his inquiry; and she led the way upstairs to the drawing-room, where that lady was waiting to receive him.

As I have said, the present Mrs. Vere was a gentlewoman by birth and education, though hard work and anxiety, and the petty shifts and subterfuges of semi-genteel poverty had crushed out much that was refined and gracious in her

manner, giving a kind of shrinking timidity to her demeanour, which, in his present frame of mind, Rookford admired far more than he could have done the most perfect self-possession.

"Lord Rookford," said the lady, glancing at his card. "You wished to see me?"

"Yes, madame; or, rather, I wished to see your daughter," somewhat awkwardly. "I have a question to ask her, which—as I cannot see her first—I had perhaps better explain to you. I want to ask her to become my wife."

"Your wife! Pray take a seat," and Mrs. Vere resumed her own chair. "Forgive me, my lord; but do your parents or friends know of your intention? Have you realised the great importance of the step you propose to take?"

"Quite, madame; my friends do not know of it, because until I have obtained your daughter's promise it would be presumption on my part to talk of her. But now I have told you what my hopes are, and what I wish to say to her, may I see Rosalind and plead my own suit?"

"Yes; but—" with hesitation, "she will be a great loss to us in many ways," sadly.

"I can well believe it; but if I am happy enough to win her I hope I shall be able in some measure to mitigate the loss of her to you. But may I see her?" eagerly.

"Yes, she is in the garden; will you go to her there, or shall I send her to you?"

"Thanks, I saw her through the window as I came upstairs; I will go to her," and a few seconds later he was walking over the soft turf under the shade of the trees to the pretty bright looking tent under which Rosalind was sitting, reading.

She started to her feet when she saw him, her face became flushed, then turned deadly pale, and she clutched the back of her chair to steady herself, as she said:

"My lord; you here? I told you to ask for my mother."

"I did so; I am here by Mrs. Vere's permission; but have you no warmer welcome to give me, darling; don't you know why I am here?"

"No."

It was all she said, and she sank back into her chair again, but the colour did not return to her cheeks, and though she pointed mutely to a chair for him to be seated, she looked very much as though she were going to faint.

But he did not take the chair, instead of that he threw himself on his knee by her side, saying in eager, impassioned tones:

"Rosalind, I love you. My life will be a blank unless it is shared by you; tell me, dearest, can you love me? Will you be my wife?"

A faint flush suffused the girl's face; she looked at him eagerly, questioningly: then she said in a low tone: "Say that again; let me hear you once more."

He repeated his words, urging his suit now with deep fervour, but a cold chill came upon him as the girl said:

"No, Lord Rookford, I would not wrong you so deeply; I should bring nothing but pain and misery to you were I to consent to be your wife; but I shall love you always—always; and I shall ever remember with gratitude the high honour you have paid me. Now you must go; henceforth we are strangers."

"But Rosalind!" urged the young man, aghast; "you love me; you yourself admit it; how then can I leave you—how can you send me away?"

"It is because I love you, that I am strong enough to resist the temptation of bringing misery upon you," was the reply; "good-bye."

And before he was aware of her intention, she had darted from his side and was gone. Nor could he see her again.

Mrs. Vere met him and tried to give him hope and comfort, but she, it was evident, was also disappointed, and he left the house at last with strangely mingled feelings of exultation and despair, for Rosalind's confession of her love for him still rang in his ears; but at the same time he heard the cruel sentence of banishment, "Henceforth we are strangers."

(To be Continued.)



LADY VIOLET'S VICTIMS.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FROM THE PORTALS OF A TOMB.

How many little mounds are spread
O'er early hopes and sorrows dead!

LIONEL walked a few hundred yards in silence by the gipsy's side, while strange images floated before his mind and paralysed his speech. He was going to take farewell of Aphra—the woman he had once called mother and loved as such—the woman whose harsh manners and ways of living had always been tempered gently to him from youth upwards, and whose touch had ever been kind and gentle.

Lionel turned once and glanced at the massive brickwork, the carved arabesques and mulioned windows of the Hall. The setting sun blazed upon the panes and seemed to illuminate the windows of Lady Constance's room with fiery glow. He pictured her happy moods; her bright thought of their future lot that was commencing for them both under such different auspices to the first, and he could hardly believe that all the clouds had faded from their path and there was to be a union perfected at last in love and faith.

He little dreamt of the desperation of the pitiless enemy who had overheard his words and sworn to dash the cup of joy again from his lips. He had forgotten Meredith, or if he recalled her it was with stony indifference and contempt. That she could contemplate a more daring crime than any which had preceded it never entered Lionel's thoughts. He believed her malice had exhausted itself long since, and also that she was unaware of his return.

"Is there no hope of Aphra's life being spared?" he asked of Darratt as they crossed the wood-land and were again on the main road.

"Not the slightest, sir. She's delirious and feverish, and all she talks of is of you and the past. 'Tis like a fire, ye see, that's fast burning her away."

"You have good medical attendance at hand, I hope," said Lionel.

"Yes, sir; a doctor comes from the village twice a day, and he shakes his head as he takes his half-crown. He's reckoned cheap, and one o' your kill or cure ones, but Aphra respects him highly. Drat ye, my sonny (this to the dog), but you've killed him this time, and Mary shall pop 'im in the stew-pan to make us a supper."

"What were you saying?" asked Lionel.

"Why he's caught as fine a rarebit, sir, as ever I saw. Never was such a dog for game. He's poor Melton's dog, as was hung for shootin' a gamekeeper, and as brave a poacher as ever set a line."

"And this doctor then gives no hopes of Aphra's life?"

"None at all, sir. She's been dyin' you see by pieces, as the sayin' goes, for years. That's a trick women 'ave; they go on frettin', and nobody knows the long and short of it, and then all of a sudden comes the end. He tells us to keep up her strength, and I pay him regular," ended the gipsy, as if his honesty were something so novel it must be chronicled."

Lionel's conscience reproached him that he had abandoned Aphra perhaps to bitter want, and that her privations had caused this mortal illness. He had left her to an evil destiny, so that she had drifted with the stream, and this was the result.

The knowledge of her impending decease threw a new light on his feelings regarding her conduct. All the wrongs she had visited on him—all the injuries her love had endeavoured, but vainly, to atone for, were forgotten. She was the Aphra whose beauty had impressed him even as a child as something rare and solemn. Her treachery and wrong-doing were forgiven—she was going to die.

And then he knew how he loved her. He remembered her strange tense beauty, dark,

passionate and lovely; the large splendid eyes that ever softened as they rested on him; the countless sacrifices she had made for him to be educated and reared unburdened by bitter ignorance; she had starved herself to give to him, begging alms from door to door to provide herself with a miserable crust, and if she had indeed been cruel in her impetuous desire for revenge, her cruelty had not shipwrecked his life, as he once feared it might have done.

Lady Constance still lived, and they would be re-united. His rank and wealth were restored to him. There was nothing worse to fear. He loved this gipsy-woman as a mother; one it was true he had been displeased with and rejected, and yet dear, if abandoned, Aphra had ever been.

"Aphra, ye see, ain't a woman as makes a fuss over anything," Darratt went on, moodily. "She kept up wonderful to the last; never complained or spoke much, only yesterday came one of her old bursts of speech. She'd been a mutterin' to herself since daybreak, and when it got to be noon, the fever took a turn. Doctor he came and said it ain't no further good tryin', she's too far gone for anything to save her; and then we 'eard a kind o' sob, and she trembled more an' lifted 'er poor 'ands on the coverlet, and says quite solemn, fixin' her eyes on Mary: 'Twas a wicked deed I planned, Mary, to take the dead child o' yours an' put it in place o' the heir of Allerton,' and Mary, she began to tremble too, and she rises and leans over Aphra and says: 'Oh, Aphra, was that wot you did wi' my boy? Don't die wi' such a sin on your soul, but make yer peace wi' God and man at the last.'

"Poor Aphra, I forgave her even as the prayer passed her lips to-day," said Lionel, sadly. "Since this morning I had harboured no thoughts of bitter aversion to her for her sin to me; it has been powerless to wound our lives."

"Aphra then, sir, began to speak quicker and yet stammered more."

"The young lady, the dear young lady, who

forgot her sorrows to care for the poor, and who used to come and read to me and teach my ignorant soul better things, let her come to me," she cried, risin' her voice, "and bring my Lionel. I've seen 'im in my dreams ever since that day when this mortal sickness overtook me. I must confess; I will atone," and then she wrung her hands, sir, and fell a-sobbin' on Mary's breast as "ud make your heart bleed to see."

The hour passed quickly, and soon Lionel and his companion perceived the tents of the gipsies' camp, standing out picturesquely against the golden red of the sky.

Darratt ran on ahead to prepare them for the advent of a visitor. Mary was standing by Aphra's side, applying vinegar rags to her temples, horrified at the dread revelation of the crime in which she had all innocently assisted. He whispered a few words in her ear, and she glided away, leaving them alone.

Aphra moved her head from side to side on the hard pillow on which her dying head rested, asking in a faint voice of Darratt:

"Is he come?"

The gipsy threw herself down by her side.

"Yes, darling, yes; I brought 'im right enough, never fear. He'll be with you in another second. You never mistook a face, Aphra, 'twas he all the time as you said."

Lionel came softly through the entrance of the tent, and Aphra's hearing, rendered doubly acute by the diminution of sight, was instantly aroused.

"Is it my Lionel? Ah! I well knew 'twas he; let him come to me for the last time. I want to ask his forgiveness."

Aphra was lying in shadow as Lionel appeared, her tawny hair about her neck and shoulders, the thin hands outstretched on the coverlet.

"Aphra!" he cried, bending closer.

"Call me 'mother' once again, Lionel."

"Mother!" That word coming from his lips, changed her slow-falling tears into hysterical sobs.

"You went away from me, my Lionel, in anger and scorn, but I would atone and confess all. There is no dark cloud about my brain binding me to silence as before. All is clear, too clear. Listen! I bend down. I stole you from your home as you laid a helpless infant in the cradle at Allerton Castle, because your father had made my life too miserable to be borne. It was wicked—as bad as murder, but I was so ignorant, Lionel, and I had learnt from him, in his careless way, that revenge was something grand and to be desired. I know now it is a pool from which only misery can spring, but I did not rightly understand; I was only a gipsy."

"You thought of yourself, Aphra, and the light was withheld," he said, softly; "your soul travelled in darkness and despair."

She raised herself somewhat with new energy.

"So now regain your rights, Lionel. In that old oaken chest in a corner of the tent, you will find proofs that what I say is the solemn truth. Bend closer, I can hardly breathe; you are Sir Lionel Allerton!"

"I knew it yesterday," he answered, quietly.

"And is that why you are so calm, Lionel? no wrath, no reproaches? I, who have destroyed your youth and manhood, and separated you from your wife and broken her heart, may still hope to be forgiven. She would come and read to me, Lionel, and talk of you by the hour together. Will you not be soon re-united, happy?"

"Yes, Aphra, it is indeed so; my love has been folded in these arms, and to-night we leave the Hall for ever."

Alas! could he but have entered that chamber in which he last parted from Lady Constance, what terrible sights must have met his eyes. For one brief hour he will dream of peace and joy, only to find ruin and suffering on his return.

"I have been wicked, false and treacherous," sobbed Aphra; "say I am forgiven."

"It was your nature to be revengeful; it runs in the gipsies' blood," he answered; "and then you were ignorant and suffered, and you could not forego revenge," he said, tenderly, as if pleading for her at another tribunal; "but all

has been changed; a mightier arm than yours has been outstretched to protect and guard the innocent, and a finer judgment than yours has awarded us happiness at the last."

"Don't cry so, Aphra, my lass, don't cry," said Darratt, "I can't bear the sight of your tears. We're all sorry enough to lose ye, and I shall never forget ye."

"Change your evil habits, Darratt," said Aphra, gently, "repent of the sins you have committed. Try and lead a better life, or retributive justice will strike hard at last; remember what my sin has cost others, and how it has wounded through every fibre of my soul and killed me at last, for the thoughts of Lionel's anger made me feel that I didn't care to live; it was a black mist that shut out all light and made me more blind than the loss of these poor eyes, but I thought I could die easier if I heard him just once say 'mother' as he used to, Darratt—as he used to."

"Dear Aphra," said Lionel, taking her hand and pressing it in his own, "I remember all your goodness to me and forgot the rest. You are in deep distress, and my love follows you still as it did in the old days when I clung to your skirts a helpless child. Your head has often rested on the hard heath so that mine should be pillow'd in comfort. Mother!—the only mother it was fated I should remember—see, I kneel by your side with all the old reverence and affection."

"Farewell, my Lionel, you were ever noble and generous. I can hardly hear your voice, but it seems as if angels were around my bed. I have died slowly by inches, my dearest, since you left me to despair."

Lionel pressed his lips to her brow, and in that moment, Aphra, with one faint sob, died quietly in his arms, re-united with the man she had loved as a son. Darratt finding all was over, flung himself down by Aphra's side in a tempest of grief.

"She was to 'ave been my wife," he cried, "years ago, though I knew I never could be equal to her, and at times like this, sir," he went on, addressing Lionel, "seems to me as if I'd often been too 'ard and cruel to Aphra. I'd give something to undo everything, and I mean to change, to live as she often told me I ought; mebbe I'll fancy she's watching me, an' knows if I'm bad as ever."

Lionel turned away in deep sorrow. Had he been too harsh also in leaving this forlorn creature to her fate that day she stabbed herself ere he sailed to Australia.

"We often wish the past undone, Darratt," he answered, slowly, after supplying the gipsy with money, and giving the necessary directions the sad occasion demanded.

And then taking one final glance at Aphra, he approached the corner of the tent in which the oaken chest stood and opened it. There were faded love-letters in his father's handwriting which Aphra had hitherto concealed from his knowledge, the Allerton crest being stamped on the paper and the same on the envelopes. It was a bold, free handwriting, and the word Allerton was here signed with a marked, characteristic flourish.

Many of these letters were dated from Brighton, and there were hazy allusions to the pier and promenade, fashionable hotels, beauties, and a general want of money, such as a man like Sir Phoenix would most probably write about. The gay flâneur must have had unmitigated trust in the gipsy's honour, for things were mentioned in these letters calculated to have worked him serious harm had she been a shrewd and unscrupulous worldling.

The expressions of endearment were not niggardly; indeed it seemed as if the heartless rogue amused himself by experimentalising on ignorance, as a lion-tamer teaches new tricks to a safe and faithful lioness. She might spring, but never assail him with mean and paltry scratches, and one might be always prepared for springs.

"Poor Aphra!" muttered Lionel, as he drew the pile towards him and glanced over several; "and there are men vile enough to trade on a woman's faith to this extent—to take an honest

heart and crush it into dust and ashes. No criminal in any prison deserves severer punishment than the man who deliberately sets himself to rob a fellow-creature of honour, peace and trust. My father was a deliberate traitor."

Lionel remained for some time transfixed and grief-worn in a corner of the tent, crushing his father's faded love-letters in his hand, while Aphra slept her last slumber.

"I wonder what my father would think if he saw her now," he muttered, giving one farewell kiss to the cold, white hand crossed on her breast, as he glided softly from the tent. A sharp shower now descended, and Lionel found himself nearly drenched to the skin as he commenced his journey to the Hall. The shower increased in violence, and an unmistakeable thunderstorm announced itself by pelting hailstones as large as peas, that descending with the force of bullets, drove him back again for shelter to the gipsy's tent.

"You never could think o' startin' in such a storm as this, sir," said Darratt, as the forked lightning flashed around them. "Ah! Look, sir. I do declare the lightning's struck the old yew-tree to the right of us. It wouldn't be safe for man or beast to think o' walking through the wood in a storm like this."

Lionel glanced at his watch; it was six o'clock. At seven Lady Constance would be expecting his return, prepared to leave the Hall with him for ever, and now the elements themselves seemed joined in combination against them.

"A fearful storm," repeated Lionel, "but it is of the utmost importance I reach the Hall at seven o'clock. I would risk my life in walking through the wood sooner than be late. What on earth shall I do?"

"Let me run to the village, sir, and ask the landlord at the 'Three Crows' to let you 'ave his 'orse and shay for an hour. In half an hour the storm's violence 'ull be past, and you could drive straight there wi' that fast trotin' mare of 'is in a good twenty minutes. He could send 'is man, ay, and will, I know, to oblige ye. I don't heed no storm," said Darratt; "it won't 'urt me along the road."

"Very well," said Lionel; "that will be of great assistance."

"Oh, I'm ready, sir," said Darratt, throwing a huge sack around his shoulders and calling to his dog. "Come along, my sonny, and trap another rarebit," he cried, whistling to the dog, which darted after him, regaled on the rabbit's head which Darratt had thrown to him as a reward.

In a short time the gipsy appeared mounted up by the side of a small youth called "Sam," the ostler at the "Three Crows," who was driving the black mare at an alarming rate. The storm's fury was now nearly spent, and Lionel was very glad to avail himself of the landlord's gig. Another twenty minutes brought them to the Park, and Lionel descending, paid the astonished Sam about three times his fare, and walked rapidly to the mansion.

"You had better wait," he said, returning in time to recall the youth, and remembering that this vehicle would be most useful in conveying himself and Lady Constance later on to the railway station.

Nothing loath, Samuel waited patiently. The dining-room blinds were drawn, and a faint flicker of light issued from them as Lionel passed the left wing of the mansion. He glanced up at Lady Constance's window, and was surprised that no white handkerchief was waved, as that had been the signal agreed upon between them. He feared that perhaps Meredith might be with her, and in that case their difficulties must increase.

An inner door leading to the lawn was open. He pushed this gently back and found himself in a long dark passage, which, however, he well knew led to the first flight of corridors. Not a sound broke the stillness that reigned on all sides, but as he proceeded on his way he could hear the rough laughter of distant voices proceeding probably from the servants' hall.

"If they found me here they might mistake

me for a burglar," he thought, groping his way upwards.

He passed the splendid suite of drawing-rooms, and was now on the front staircase. Surely Constance was watching and waiting for him, and yet he was surprised she made no sign; still, if Meredith were with her, he could easily frame some apology on having mistaken his way and retire.

He ascended the next flight; a tiny skye terrier, a pet dog of Lady Constance, was whining dismal by the staircase window, and then running to the door of her room, scratched loudly at the panel with his fore feet, whining more dismal than ever at meeting no response.

Lionel now grew alarmed; he opened the door gently, while the little dog rushed towards the couch on which Lady Constance reclined, barking now louder than ever, and yet she did not move. Lionel crossed the room rapidly, calling her by name. One hand hung down apparently lifeless at her side; her head was in shadow, and she had all the appearance of being sound asleep.

"Constance!" he cried, on his knees beside her, "my angel love, wake; it is time we fled, and I have all in readiness."

He gazed at her eyelids: they were blue and swollen, and there was foam about her lips. Great heaven! what could it mean? Could she be dead, she who would have soon commenced to live? Dead! when he came to claim her? Cold and lifeless when he thought to have found her glowing in palpitating beauty and rapture? He placed his hand on her heart; it was still feebly beating; he rained kisses on her lips and brow. Tresses of the luxuriant hair which had been one of her greatest charms hung over her shoulders, and her blush-rose complexion, now pale and grey, had a curious ivory richness in its tints, as if some fatal power were making cruel inroads on the system.

He glanced towards the table and took up an empty cup, in which some sediment remained. The awful truth then flashed over him with lightning rapidity; he saw the evil work of another, and knew they had been out-matched and undone by a crafty foe. Alas! this agony was fiercer than that which had assailed him when he had taken farewell of Lady Constance in the coffin.

"Great heavens!" cried Lionel, taking her in his arms and staggering wildly to the door. "It is as I feared: she has been poisoned!"

The guests around the earl's table were beginning to softly expand at the pleasant dinner, under the mingled influence of milk punch and turtle soup. The earl's chef was an artist—dirt cheap at three hundred a year—and prepared his soups with a skill the great Francatelli might have envied.

Dr. Moseley, sitting by Lady Violet, was listening pensively to her gay persiflage, while Sir Hugh, a little lower down the table between the Duchess of Chastelard and her daughter Anastasia, was exerting himself to be amusing, wondering why Leo did not "put in" an appearance at the dinner-table. Sir Hugh fancied he might be engaged with some solicitors for the purpose of substantiating his claims to the property or in hunting up evidence, and believed he might sooner or later "turn up," desperately weary and famished.

Miss Spink and two or three kindred souls sipped the milk-punch and turtle soup with that mild air of protest which seems to say it is a crime to enjoy anything in this world, watching every turn of Dr. Moseley's whiskers and Lady Violet's eyebrows as if to cry "Breakers ahead" long before the foolish ship had resolved on sinking.

Lady Violet had never looked more fascinating than in her black lace dinner-dress, embroidered with flowers; her hair à la Sevigné looped up here and there with diamonds. Her beautiful throat looked as if cut in marble, and the rippling laughter from the rose-bud lips was as intoxicating or even more so than the costly vintages which graced the board. The dinner

was served as usual à la Russe, and the well-trained servants glided noiselessly around as if shod in velvet shoes.

"It was evident he meant to stay to dinner," Miss Spink was saying to her crony Miss Mogg, "and I shouldn't be at all surprised he stays quite late. They mean to get up a little dance by-and-bye in the drawing-room, and I shall have to play for them. Isn't it a shame?"

"Why, my dear, we must do something for our money," answered the cheerful Miss Mogg, "and I can remember the 'Blue Danube Waltzes' without my notes; isn't that lucky? I quite enjoy seeing Lady Violet dance; she's so graceful."

"Oh, Priscilla! how can you?" cried Miss Spink; "only to talk of it is bad enough, and he a married man!"

"Why, my dear Lady Violet, you are taking nothing," Dr. Moseley was saying, turning suddenly round and catching Miss Spink's eye. "Do you know that little, plain, objectionable person in plum-colour has been watching us incessantly?"

"Little, plain, objectionable people always would notice me," said Lady Violet, laughing delightedly; "and I once used to be naughty and flirt on purpose to make them say spiteful things of me. It's so amusing."

"Of course. Grapes are sour over there. Ha! ha!"

"Not only sour, but acid, quite vitriolic; set your teeth on edge to look at them," answered Lady Violet, while Miss Spink, contemplating a gold rim on the edge of her plate, thinks the aristocracy have much too good a time of it and hates them accordingly.

"Hush! Did you hear that noise?" asked the earl, startled, and looking around. "I thought I heard a hurried trampling of feet outside as if the house were on fire. What can it be?"

The guests listened, and some rose to their feet. Suddenly the door was burst open, and Lionel, pale and haggard, bearing Lady Constance in his arms, stood before them.

"What is the meaning of this?" cried the earl, pale in his turn. "Who are you bringing in our midst?"

"Your dying child, my lord, and my wife!"

"Wife?" re-echoed Lady Violet, while Dr. Moseley started to his feet, crying:

"Merciful powers, why it's the landscape gardener after all!"

"Not a Baron!" screamed Lady Violet, giving evidence of an impending fainting-fit, and falling back in her chair.

The earl's great dread was that Lady Constance had committed suicide. Sir Hugh meanwhile rushed to Lionel's side, and between them they examined the inanimate girl.

"Dying, Leo, yes! it is indeed so, but there are yet hopes of her life being spared," he cried. "I'll fetch a doctor at once."

"Yes," said Lionel, "fly. At the lower gates you will see a horse and gig; drive with all speed to the village, and bring back Dr. Norton. Tell him it's a case of poisoning!"

"Poisoning?" repeated the earl. "Oh! my poor darling, then your mental anguish was too great; she has committed suicide!"

"Poison!" repeated the guests, who were now crowding round Lionel and Lady Constance in horror and amazement, wondering if the cook were a specimen of the Lucrezia Borgia tribe, and had prepared a poisoned banquet for them all.

"This is indeed serious," cried Dr. Moseley, seized with a terrible fear he had also fallen a victim, and letting his table napkin fall into his plate of half-finished soup as spasmodic thrills announced themselves.

Could the marvellous chef, that presiding divinity of the kitchen, have been a half-fledged lunatic? He now regarded Lady Constance with sorrowful interest as she lay apparently lifeless in Lionel's arms. The earl having lost consciousness at this sudden shock, was forgotten in the general excitement.

Lady Violet regained her presence of mind, and suggested to Dr. Moseley that they searched the apartment of Lady Constance, and see what

could be found as giving any clue to this mysterious tragedy.

"Perhaps I could prescribe," said Moseley, approaching Lady Constance, and feeling her pulse. "Ah! I remember you, sir," he went on, addressing Lionel; "you forced a very neat entry into my house and wounded me in the arm."

"And you foisted a vile scheme and plot on me, Dr. Moseley, in leading me to think my wife was dead in her coffin, when she only laid in a trance!"

"Hush! hush! my dear sir, no violence; I will explain all. Remember we are in the presence of ladies."

"I remember you are false, a villain, and a thief!" said Lionel, deliberately.

"There'll be a duel presently!" cried Miss Spink, wringing her hands. "I always knew that Moseley was a bad one, I did indeed, and they will fire at each other near the rhododendrons on the lawn, like poor Captain Hatherway and Mr. Allspice; and only to think of the landscape gardener coming back to find his wife had poisoned herself. Oh! my dear, don't talk of novels and the 'Daily Telegraph's' tragedies. I think we had better retire from this godless assemblage for a little fresh air."

Lionel and Dr. Moseley had now hurried to Lady Constance's room, the latter glad to escape Lionel's scathing censure. The doctor seizing the empty cup that had attracted Lionel's attention, pronounced the sediment to be a portion of a very deadly poison, and drew Lady Violet's attention to its peculiar quality.

"I do not think your sister was a likely subject for suicide; she was too sweet and gentle for violence," he said, thoughtfully.

"I agree with you, José," answered Lady Violet; "someone else has done it." Then quick as thought she muttered: "Meredith!"

"Ah! she's far more likely to have been the promoter of this tragedy!" cried the doctor; "there was always a touch of the diabolical in her, if you like."

He moved aside the screen, and a horrible sight met his view—Meredith stone dead, her hands thrown above her head, her teeth clinched, and her face and limbs contorted as if with mortal pain.

The guests of the earl were that night fated for terrible visions, for the next person who met their view on the staircase was Dr. Moseley carrying in his arms a lifeless figure, in whom life was extinct, and whose death struggle had been fierce and fatal.

(To be Continued.)

TRAIN THE BOYS FOR BUSINESS.

THERE is one element in the home instruction of boys to which too little attention has been given, and that is the cultivation of habits of punctuality, system, order, and responsibility. In too many households boys from twelve to seventeen years are too much administered to by loving mothers or other female members of the family. Boys' lives during those years are the halcyon days of their existence. Up in the morning just in season for breakfast; nothing to do but to start off early enough not to be late; looking upon an errand as taking so much time and memory away from enjoyment; little thought of personal appearance except when reminded by mother to "spruce up" a little; finding his wardrobe always where mother puts it—in fact, having nothing to do but enjoy himself.

Thus his life goes on until school ends. Then he is ready for business. He goes into an office where everything is system, order, precision. He is expected to keep things neat and orderly, sometimes kindle fires, file letters, do errands—in short, become a part of a nicely regulated machine, where everything moves in systematic grooves, and each one is responsible for correctness in his department, and where, in place of ministers to his comfort, he finds task masters,

more or less lenient, to be sure, and everything in marked contrast to his previous life.

In many instances the change is too great. Errors become numerous; blunders, overlooked at first, get to be a matter of serious moment; then patience is overtired, and the boy is told his services are no longer wanted. This is his first blow, and sometimes he never rallies from it. Then comes the surprise to the parents, who too often never know the real cause, nor where they have failed in the training of their children.

What is wanted is for every boy to have something special to do; to have some duty at a definite hour, and to learn to watch for that time to come; to be answerable for a certain portion of the routine of the household; to be trained to anticipate the time when he may enter the ranks of business, and be fortified with habits of energy, accuracy, and application, often of more importance than superficial book learning.

THE VOLUNTEERS.

THE volunteers are in future to wear a distinction for long service. Having rendered themselves efficient and entitled to the Government grant, a cloth badge to be worn of diamond shape on the sleeve above the Austrian knot. When the volunteer has further rendered himself efficient for five years, and gained as many certificates, this diamond becomes a star worked in silk or worsted. A second period of five years as an efficient Volunteer entitles the man to a second star, and he may in like manner earn a third or fourth distinction.

One of the recommendations of the Departmental Committee that has been considering Volunteer regulations is, we hear, to the effect that in future the whole force is to be clothed in one colour, and that the national red. The Line and Militia are dressed in scarlet, and as our Volunteers, if they should ever be called upon for active service, would be required to act in the same brigades and divisions, it is reasonable that they should be similarly attired. All that is needed is a simple difference in detail to distinguish one force from the other.

MACHINERY FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF TOYS.

TOY making by hand cannot bear high wages for labour nor high prices for wood. Hence the most important centres of toy industry were established on the high mountains of Germany and Switzerland, where forests abound and the population were willing to work long hours for small pay. What can be done in the way of cheap production is illustrated at Leiffen, in Saxony, in a manner almost terrible. For making 180 toy kitchen utensils, as they are usually furnished to this country, three-halfpence is paid. Sixty small boxes for packing these toys are paid for with from fivepence to sevenpence. The making of wooden toys is almost the sole industry in many parts of central Europe, and the united labour of all, from the grandfather to the grandfather formerly sufficed to obtain for the toiling families only a bare subsistence.

Here, one would think, if anywhere, the introduction of machinery would prove disastrous to hand labour. With the machinery now employed one man, working one machine ten hours a day, can turn out an amount of work which was formerly accomplished by a whole family working from eighteen to twenty hours a day for several weeks; and during recent years such machinery has been widely and rapidly introduced in the toy-making regions.

What has happened? The starvation of the poor hard-worker? That ought to be the result, if the socialist's objections to machinery were true; but such is not the result. On the contrary, the condition of the toy makers has

been directly improved by the influence of machinery. In this way: The cost of toys, small as it used to be, has been enormously reduced, and the market for toys correspondingly widened. And though machinery now does the larger part of the work, the amount of work to be done has been so increased that the demand for handwork, in putting the parts of the toys together and the like, has been largely augmented.

The result is the employment, at fair wages, of all the population, including aged people, cripples, and children, who otherwise would have nothing to do. Besides, the multiplication of factories has brought the scattered peasants together, schools have been established and artistic taste has been developed in a way to make the work done of greater value and more attractive, with a corresponding increase in the value of labour. From Nurnberg alone there are now sent out some 23,000 tons of toys, the price lists of which number 16,000 different designs. Since the introduction of steam machinery into the toy industry of this place the annual product has increased twenty-fold. At Sonneberg, in Thuringia, not long ago a small hamlet, but now quite a city, the annual production of toys amounts to some £2,000,000.

A RUSSIAN HERO.

OR,

Marko Tyre's Treason.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE remainder of our heroine's journey to the capital, after her escape from Dal, as related, was performed without the least danger or trouble.

"It is getting late," she said to Stolbi, her faithful attendant, as they drew their horses to a walk upon one of the quays of the tranquil Neva. "I am a pretty looking object, with the marks of our fight and our ride, and especially with the dust that has settled upon me. I would hardly care to present myself to the empress in such a fix as this, or even to Captain Tyre. Besides, it is too late to present ourselves at the palace in such a forlorn fashion. A better course will be for me to call upon the Countess Grodin, and pass the night with her. She has long been one of the most intimate friends of our family, you know, and is even related to us distantly by blood and marriage. You can slip on to the Winter Palace, and tell Captain Tyre of my safety and whereabouts, and give him an account of all that has happened."

They separated upon this basis at the entrance of the Grodin Palace, which they reached by the time Roda had charged Stolbi as fully as she desired with messages for Marko.

The hour was past midnight, but the residence of the Grodins was still as bright and lively as fairy-land, the family belonging to the highest rank of the nobility, and having, with all Russian nobles, the habit of making night the busiest and happiest portion of the twenty-four hours, especially in summer.

The palace was situated in the midst of ground corresponding to its splendours, not far from the Moscow Barrier, and was as remarkable for its collections of beauty and art as almost any of the great palaces of to-day existing in Rome and Florence.

This is equivalent to saying, of course, that the Grodins had long possessed both brains and money, and had used the same for the best glory of their kind.

They had, in fact, long been numbered among the prominent public benefactors of the country.

For three or four generations the Counts of Grodin had figured commandingly in war, finance, and statesmanship, holding important posts under the government. The present head

of the house was a gentleman still in the prime of life, but unfortunately the possessor of poor health, so that it was impossible for him to accept any of the employments Catherine and her predecessor had placed at his disposal. This circumstance naturally brought the Countess Grodin into great prominence.

Her husband counted upon her executive capacities for the management of his extensive affairs, and more especially did it devolve upon her to maintain and widen the vast circle of friends by which the Grodins had so long been surrounded.

It is not too much to say, therefore, that the Countess Grodin stood in the very front rank of the nobles in Russia at the period of which we are writing.

The bearing of the attendant at the entrance of the palace, as he noted the separation of the new-comers, was at first a little wondering and reserved; for, as Roda had suggested, her appearance had been considerably qualified by the experiences through which she had passed.

But at sight of her fresh and bright face, as she passed under one of the lights at the entrance, the attendant's manner changed in a way which showed how welcome to the entire household would be her presence.

The countess is at home, I suppose, Norloff?" asked Roda, after she had amiably greeted the porter.

"She is, Miss Gradowsky. Please walk in."

He led the way into a gorgeous private boudoir, after first sending one of his associates to look after our heroine's horse, and at once went in quest of his mistress.

He returned at the end of a few moments to say that the Countess Grodin would soon be with Roda.

In effect, the attendant had hardly vanished when the countess entered.

She was charming little lady, all life and animation, keen-witted and dignified, with a beauty that was as brilliant as commanding. Yet while she was so remarkably attractive in person, a glance at her expressive features and radiant eyes was sufficient to assure the observer that she ruled men by the gifts and graces of her spirit.

Talented, travelled, and wealthy to independence, she had made her palace one of the great rallying points of all the distinguished professions of Russia, as well as one of the most charming centres of reunion of the best society.

It was seldom that there were not a number of guests at the palace, and upon some of the lovely evenings in summer they could have been counted by hundreds.

"My dear child!" cried the countess, precipitating herself upon Roda with a little scream of delight, and caressing and kissing her. "How delightful it is to see you here again! I hope you have come for a long stay, as I have so often demanded. You have responded to one of the most pressing desires of my soul by coming! I should have driven out to your estates to-morrow to bring you home with me. How well you are looking!—yet a little pale and excited. Sit down! sit down! Vatchie will soon arrive with refreshments. The house is full of guests, but I have made my excuses, and we'll have the rest of the night to ourselves!"

She drew Roda away to one of the magnificent sofas ornamenting the apartment, responding rapidly and brightly to all of our heroine's inquiries in regard to her own health and family.

"What good genius put it into your head to come just as I was so anxious to see you?" asked the countess, sitting down beside Roda, still holding her hand.

"Oh, a number of strange circumstances, which I shall have the pleasure of communicating to you," replied Roda. "I have not forgotten, you see, the kind invitations you have so often given me to come and pay you a visit."

"But why didn't you bring Mouska and Mrs. Pleffsky and the rest?" asked the countess. "Not

that you will lack for attendance here, but I know you always prefer your own people."

"They all started with me," said Roda, smilingly, "but they have been halted by the way, and will probably not arrive under an hour or two."

"Why, what do you mean? Tell me all about it, dear, as soon as possible. I saw at a glance that something very strange has happened. I am all excitement!"

Roda thereupon narrated in brief all her adventures since nightfall, precisely as we have detailed them to the reader.

The surprise with which the countess learned of such high-handed proceedings on the part of Dal was equalled only by her admiration of the courage and daring of Roda, and by her joy at the success of this brave battle.

"This will be startling and yet agreeable news to my husband," said the countess. "He will rejoice at your escape as I do. Dal is one of the few men he has taken the trouble to detest cordially. But is it not clear from what you have told me that Dal has guilty knowledge of the mysterious disappearance of your father and mother?"

"It is certainly to be suspected and feared," replied Roda, gravely.

"The truth is, my dear Roda," resumed the countess, "Dal has been with his aunt, the Countess Sabielin, almost constantly during the last few months, and she is a woman—well, I think Satan would have put her in charge of his private office, if she had appeared upon the stage of existence sooner! She is a fiend incarnate! That she and her nephew have long had guilty knowledge of the fate of your parents, child, I haven't a doubt! You did not shoot Dal fatally, I suppose?"

"No, only to disable him. He stands so high in the good graces of the empress—"

"That is all changed now," interrupted the Countess Grodin, smilingly. "Dal has fallen into disgrace, in the course of to-day, and has been dismissed the service, while Captain Tyre has been raised to the rank of colonel, and placed in command of her majesty's favourite regiment!"

"Ah! these facts are generally known, then?" cried Roda. "Perhaps you are also aware of what has befallen me within the last twenty-four hours?"

"Oh, yes, Baroness! The good intentions of her majesty towards you have already passed through the whole circle of the court. How nicely everything is going on! We'll tell the count everything in the morning, and see if we cannot hit upon some course of action that will make Dal repent of his violence. I must not keep you up longer, after the exciting adventure you have had with Dal and his creatures!"

"I was never so weary in my life, as I remember," said Roda, "but I am sure I am still too excited to sleep. I feel that events of the gravest importance to me and mine are about happening—as if I were standing on the verge of a terrific unknown! Why should I feel this way?"

"Perhaps your good angel is whispering to you of some coming good that mortal eyes have not yet seen," returned the countess. "One thing is certain: we will all get together in the morning, and see if we cannot place ourselves upon the track of some important discovery. That both your father and mother are alive somewhere, I haven't the shadow of a doubt!"

The vast parlours were nearly emptied of their pleased and lively guests, although the strain of fairy-like music was still blending with the hum of voices, when Norloff suddenly entered the little boudoir when the Countess Grodin and Roda were conversing.

The mien of the attendant was singularly bright and smiling. He brought a card upon a silver salver.

The countess looked her surprise.

"I told you I could see no one to-night, you know," she said.

"But I am sure you will see Colonel Tyre, my lady."

"Colonel Tyre!" exclaimed the ladies in chorus. "Of course!"

The porter withdrew.

"Stolbi has made quick time to the palace," said Roda, "and Colonel Tyre has been as prompt to come!"

"That's always the case with these lovers," murmured the countess, who was aware of the relations between the young couple. "Here he is—one of the noblest and grandest men in existence!"

The greetings of our hero were tender to Roda and warm to the countess. They were for him the two grandest women in the world, notwithstanding the fascinations of his late interviews with Catherine.

"I was at the entrance of the palace," he said, "waiting and watching for you, Roda, when Stolbi put in an appearance, and he had such a story to tell me of your adventures by the way that I hastened to fly hither as fast as a good horse could bring me! You were not injured by Dal?"

"Not in the least!"

"But it seems that she left ample signs of her passage, Colonel!" cried the countess. "On the principle that a workman is known by his chips, I suppose!"

The laughter of the merry trio filled the apartment.

How pleased they all were with themselves and with each other! What happiness had come for them!

"You can only faintly imagine," said our hero, "the pleasure I experience at seeing you again, Roda—or Baroness, if you prefer that name—not only in view of the exciting adventures you have had since I saw you, but also in view of mine. I daresay we have lived years in the last forty-eight hours. You will both be delighted to hear that I bring you the best of news."

"The best, Colonel Tyre?" repeated the countess, significantly. "The best would be very good indeed, you must remember!"

"Well, very good news, at the least," insisted Marko, with a strange smile.

"Then you bring me news of my parents!" cried Roda, turning pale with joyous excitement.

"Yes—of one of them," avowed Marko, as he gathered his betrothed to his heart. "Your father not only lives, but I have seen him."

A dead silence succeeded. The joy of our heroine, and even of the Countess Grodin, was too great for utterance.

"And not only have I seen General Gradowsky," pursued Marko, lowering his voice to a whisper, "but I have concealed him in a place of safety. Of course I have the strangest adventures in the world to report to you. Be calm and brave! Let us sit down here together and I will tell you all that has happened!"

At this moment Norloff bounded into the boudoir with as wild an air as if pursued by demons!

"The General—"

The announcement died away upon his lips.

"Who comes?" cried the countess.

"The General Gradowsky!"

It was indeed the general, who, at that instant, appeared in the doorway—coming here as quickly and directly as possible from his terrible interview with the Countess Sabielin.

The reader can imagine not only the joyous scene of restoration that now took place, but also the mingled joy and terror with which were heard the wild revelations that followed!

CHAPTER XX.

In the spacious reception-room where we first saw her, the empress was pacing slowly to and fro, absorbed in deep thought.

The hour was not far from noon. The mists of the preceding night had all lifted from the face of the river.

The chill that always comes with fogs in St. Petersburg had also vanished. The sky was as clear as crystal.

A genial heat pervaded the air. All nature seemed to have awakened anew, and to have put on fresh robes of life and beauty.

A single glance at Catherine would have detected that she was as bright as the day, as if she had come under the softening influences it so richly scattered.

She had robed herself, as was becoming to the head of a vast empire, with all that wealth and art and magnificence could furnish to heighten her commanding presence.

She glittered in diamonds, and floated in laces and satins, and sparkled with a vivacity of spirits that corresponded with the scene immediately around her and out of doors.

She was contented with herself, and with the situation of the affairs in which she was especially interested. In a word, she was the great Catherine in one of her best and brightest moods and moments.

"The girl is a gem," she murmured, with an emphatic gesture. "I had no suspicion there was so much in her—courage, sweetness, and intelligence. She is worthy of her new honours, and of anything else that even a great sovereign can do for her. And Marko—how splendid he is in his new uniform, and with the new sense of power and responsibility his promotion has given him. A noble couple they are!"

She seated herself at the table in the centre of the apartment, and began looking over a package of official documents.

"The sky has certainly cleared with the execution of General Roskin and Prince Patin, and with the departure of Marshal Blitskin to eternal exile in Siberia," she mused, as a stern shadow crossed her face. "Friend and foe shall alike find that the 'great Catherine' is not slow to punish such crimes as these men have committed. Would that I could put my hands on the other traitors and conspirators who are disturbing the peace and glory of my reign. It is strange where the leek is," she added; "but there is a shrewd and cunning plotter near me—probably high in my confidence—who betrays my secrets to my enemies, and conveys to them timely warning of all the movements taken for their suppression. Were such not the case, I would have long since been able to lay my hands upon the Hidden Peterkin. Is the man a reality, or is he a mere rumour that has fixed the attention of the public? And if really a living personality, who and what is he? Where does he keep himself? How is it that my chief of police has been able to tell me nothing about him?"

The musings of the empress were suddenly and terribly interrupted.

A door had opened almost noiselessly at one side of the room, and three sinister-looking men entered, wrapped in large army cloaks, and wearing the large bearskin hats affected by the officers of one of her favourite regiments, and which were so voluminous as to conceal in a great measure the features of the wearer. At the advent of these men so unexpectedly, unannounced, the empress was startled.

"Who are you, gentlemen?" she cried, starting to her feet.

The three men threw off their cloaks and hats, revealing complete Turkish uniforms and arms, even to the curved scimitar which always characterises a military officer of that nation.

Catherine saw all at a glance!

The intruders were three Turkish assassins!

They must have been furnished with the password of the day by some traitor in her own household, or they could not have possibly passed so many guards and penetrated so far into the interior of the palace.

Turning the key in the door by which they had entered, the leader of the intruders drew his scimitar, with a flourish meant to strike terror to Catherine's soul.

"We are Moslems direct from Constantinople," he avowed, in a French that would not have been unworthy of a native of Paris. "At the order of our mighty chief, the Sultan, we have come here to kill you, great empress. Too long have you been warring upon the people of the true prophet. We three brave Moslems have

devoted ourselves to destruction, but we shall first have the pleasure of sending your majesty before us to the land of shadows!"

A wild cry for assistance burst from the lips of the empress as she interposed her writing-table between herself and the assassins.

"Forward, my children!" ordered the leader of the Moslems. "Strike her down!"

The three assassins advanced in a body, with murder in their movements and glances.

A second wild cry escaped Catherine, and it was not unheeded.

Her voice was still echoing in the apartment when the door by which the assassins had entered burst open with a terrific crash, and Marko Tyre, sword in hand, bounded into the presence of his endangered sovereign.

"Save me! save me!" she cried.

A single glance Marko had comprehended the situation.

He knew that the policy of Catherine had been for years of a nature to arouse the fiercest fanaticism on the Bosphorus, and the simplest view of the presence of these Turkish uniforms was a sufficient revelation of the work in progress. It is easy to imagine, from what the reader knows of Marko's nature, how quickly he placed himself between the intruders and their intended victim.

"Now, then, Moslems!" was his cry of warning and defiance.

The battle was engaged on the instant.

It is also easy to imagine how quickly and terribly the Moslems were disconcerted by the flaming sword of Marko.

They had never had to do with a swordsman of his ability, and still less with one of his peculiar method.

The head of the foremost assassin was stricken from his shoulders at the first blow Marko delivered, and the shock this event gave the others was followed so quickly by a direct advance and assault that all their defences were carried as if by a resistless destruction. In less time than it has taken to record the fact, the three Turks lay weltering in the agonies of death at the feet of Marko, one beheaded, another pierced through and through in two places, and the third cut nearly asunder.

So that even before Catherine had realised her safety, our hero was kneeling at her feet, and looking up into her face with his calmest air.

"Your majesty will please pardon me for spilling the blood of these worthless dogs upon such an elegant carpet!" he petitioned. "My excuse must be the urgency of the occasion."

He calmly wiped his sword upon his handkerchief and returned it to its scabbard.

"My brave and glorious Marko!" cried Catherine, as she precipitated herself upon him, catching him to her breast, and kissing him again and again. "Once more you have shown me how glorious you are? From the depths of my soul I thank you!"

By this time the room was filling with the startled members of her household, serfs and dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen, who had come in response to her wild cries for assistance.

"The peril is over, friends!" announced the empress, who had recovered all her coolness and serenity. "These Turkish assassins had stolen in here, by favour of some traitor in the palace, who has betrayed the countersign, but General Tyre arrived in time to save me."

"Three cheers for General Tyre!" proposed Captain Neblin, the officer in charge of the interior guards of the palace.

The walls around seemed to tremble with the acclamations that succeeded.

"Thanks, thanks, friends, to all of you!" cried Marko, who had flushed like a timid girl. "But—spare me! Spare me! I have only done my duty. You all seem to have taken example of our most gracious majesty, and are by far too kind to me."

"Away with this carrion!" cried the empress, spurning the dead body of the principal assassin with her foot. "Let the room be cleared and cleansed, Captain Neblin. Away, all, to your posts. Look sharply around to see that these three knaves have no following!"

The room cleared rapidly.

"Come in, my dear Baroness," said Catherine to our heroine, who, in a splendid new robe, had just appeared in the doorway. "Come in. You should have been here a minute sooner. It would have thrilled you, as it did me, to see Marko deal with these three wretched assassins."

Roda could not help shuddering as her eyes encountered the scene before her. The reception-room looked like the sanguinary shambles of a butcher.

"How do you like your new quarters, dear?" pursued the empress, as she motioned Roda to take a seat near her. "Is everything as pleasant as expected? In a word, are you at home here?"

"As much as I can be anywhere, your majesty, until my poor father has been restored to his wonted place and favour," said Roda, as gently as earnestly. "This is now all that is wanting to complete my happiness."

"Then dismiss all the shadows from your face on the instant, Baroness," returned the empress smilingly. "The necessary orders were issued before I saw you this morning, and a special messenger has gone to the palace of the Grodins to bring your father to me. Ah! here he is now!"

It was indeed General Gradowsky who entered the reception-room at this moment, but he was so changed from the late prisoner of the fortress that it would have been difficult to recognise him as the same person.

In the first place, he put on a new uniform, and buckled on the sword which had so long been idle.

With the great change that had come to his fortunes, had come back to his face his old genial smile, his martial air, his noble dignity, all the grand qualities which had made him in former days one of the most striking notabilities of Catherine's court.

The empress advanced quickly to meet him, extending her hand.

"Most welcome to your rightful place, Gen. Gradowsky," she said, feelingly. "I ask your forgiveness for the great wrong I have done you!"

"Do not mention the matter, your majesty," said the general, with all his old geniality finding expression in his voice and mien. "I forgive and forget everything amiss, and turn at once from all that past darkness to the living light your majesty is now scattering around us! Happy hour! that makes amends for all my poor child and I have suffered!"

He drew Roda to his heart, and then turned attention to the traces of the late battle. A few words explained everything, and a little group gathered around the empress, awaiting her orders and pleasure.

"You will of course desire rest, General Gradowsky, for a few days or weeks," said Catherine, graciously, "and I shall therefore give you leave of absence for a month, although your name will appear in the next 'Gazette' as the commanding officer of this department. I see you stand in need of repose and medical treatment. How you must have suffered!"

"My sufferings are as nothing in comparison with the joy I now experience, your majesty," returned the general, feelingly. "If my wife were only here, how complete would be our happiness! My poor wife! Where is she at this moment? Is she an angel in heaven, looking down smilingly upon us, or is she still sorrowing in some dark and horrible prison on earth? Terrible question! that keeps rising before my soul during every waking moment! Would that it could be answered!"

"You will, of course, enter upon your proposed search for your wife immediately?" said the empress, "You will call upon me for any facilities at my disposal. It has really come to be, to me, a curious problem already. If your wife is still alive, what a plot must have been formed against you!"

"I fear I shall be more than ever the object of envy, your majesty, now that I am again the object of your majesty's distinguishing kindness!" said the general. "And if greed is at the bottom of this persecution, it will soon find

new incitement, in the fact that Misdrak has left me every rouble of his vast possessions!"

"Indeed, General? Upon what ground?"

"Because I once saved his life, your majesty, in one of my campaigns near Novgorod. He told me, before he died, that his papers concerned me more deeply than I supposed. Sure enough, on looking them over, I found a formal will in my favour!"

"I am glad to hear this, General," said Catherine. "He must have left you two or three millions?"

"Between two and three, I think."

"If your theory is correct, then your enemies will have greater inducements than ever to turn you to account financially," said Catherine. "Let me hope that you be on your guard against them. I will look for frequent reports of your proceedings, and will also expect to have your address at hand from one moment to another. As you can see by what is now under your eyes, and she indicated the traces of the late attempt at assassination, which several guardsmen were busily engaged in removing, "I have terrible enemies, and presume I may soon have to summon you to my assistance!"

"Not while Marko is here, I trust, your majesty," returned Gradowsky, with an admiring and affectionate glance at our hero.

"Not unless his deserved distinction should cause the traitors and envious around me to turn their attentions to him," said the Empress, as a shade crossed her face. "Rest assured that we will all endeavour to give a good account of ourselves, General, when we again see you!"

A few minutes later, leaving Roda and Marko so happily situated at the palace, General Gradowsky was on his way to his estates with the intention of devoting, during the next few weeks, all the powers of his soul to the solution of the problems by which he was environed.

The afternoon passed rapidly to the Empress and Marko and Roda, who were as busy as bees with all the duties and pleasures growing out of their new surroundings, and another night was at hand before they knew it. It was then arranged that Roda should visit the opera with the Empress, while Marko should remain in charge of the palace; but at the same time the empress enjoined upon him to go and take a stroll in the squares or along the quays, to obtain a breath of fresh air and a moment of repose from the exciting cares of the day. It was with this end in view that, not long after nightfall, Marko assumed a neat undress uniform, and took his way from the palace, after a long discussion with the empress and Roda concerning the Countess Sabolin and Dal, the late conduct of the couple, their whereabouts and probable further proceedings.

(To be Continued.)

THE metropolitan volunteer commanding officers have decided that a field-day on Easter Monday on a large scale is impracticable, suitable ground not being obtainable.

SEVEN hundred journalists, said to represent 1,002 Catholic publications in different parts of Europe and America, were received on Saturday by the Pope, to whom each made some offering. In the course of an address, in which he pointed out the course which should be pursued by Catholic writers, the Pope repeated that the temporal power was indispensable to the Holy See.

It may not be generally known that in the "Trust cases" just now being tried in the Chancery Courts upwards of twenty million sterling is involved, indirectly and directly. If the case should be given against the interpretation of the law as laid down by Mr. Justice Fry and Lord Westbury when they were at the bar, a flood-gate of litigation will be opened such as will probably block the law courts for years, and scores of cases be presented for trial which would otherwise never be disputed. Another instance is thus afforded of the extraordinary state into which our law practice is fallen, and the glorious uncertainty of British law.

POLITE TO THE DEATH.—AN ANECDOTE OF LORD NORBURY.

I HEARD the story first on the rostrum, from Bentley O'Hay, in a lecture on Irish wit and humour, but I never thought of repeating it in print until I had been assured by an Irish lawyer of our city, well qualified to speak with authority, that I might depend upon the narrative as being literally true. He could himself avouch for the eccentricities of Lord Norbury, and at times (some said when a little more wine had been taken before dinner than was usual) he carried the characteristic to exhibitions simply ridiculous and nonsensical. But to the story:

On a certain occasion Lord Norbury was holding criminal court in Longford, on the docket of which much business had been forced by a series of labour and rent riots, during the progress of which many lives had been sacrificed. On the occasion referred to, and on the second day of the sessions, six men were arraigned in a lump for riot, arson, and murder. They had attacked the dwelling of a wealthy land-owner at night; had set fire to it; and had shot down several of the inmates who had tried to prevent the incendiary act. The trial was brief. The acts committed had been done openly, and the prisoners at the bar were connected with them as chief actors beyond dispute. Either his lordship forgot, or else he laboured under the impression that he had but five prisoners before him; and, in his rendering of judgment, he called only five names, and sentenced only five men, entirely overlooking Mr. Martin O'Rourke, who crouched away in a corner of the pen. Whether the sheriff was equally oblivious, or whether he thought the judge had purposely omitted one of the culprits, we cannot say; enough that, at a sign from the court, he opened the iron-spiked door, and led the prisoners forth.

And then it was that the clerk of the court, just aroused to a full sense of the error, leaped to his feet, and called his lordship's attention to the omission.

"There were six of them, your honour, and you sentenced but five. The man O'Rourke you did not condemn at all."

Lord Norbury was aroused in a moment. He shouted for the crier; and the crier shouted for the sheriff; and when the latter officer appeared he was directed to bring Martin O'Rourke back into court, and place him in the prisoner's box. And the thing was done as ordered. The prisoner looked sad and dejected as he stepped again into the box, for he knew that he was not to be spared.

"My very good friend," said the judge, bowing most politely to the prisoner, "I made a sad mistake regarding yourself, and I beg your pardon from the bottom of my heart. You should have been sentenced with your companions, but, somehow, the duty slipped my mind entirely. You will excuse me, I am sure. The requirements of the law, and the sentence of the court, is, that you, Martin O'Rourke—how I could have made such an omission is surprising—that you be taken hence to the common gaol, there kept in solitary confinement until the day of execution, when you will be taken forth to the gallows, and hanged by the neck until you are dead. And may the Lord have mercy on your soul! You will pardon me for this delay? It was a mistake, I assure you; but it is all right now, and you should be content."

A strange road to contentment, surely!—R.H.

SPANISH STORIES.

SOME of these old tales are cleverly told. A certain knave once saw a parson putting up money in his pouch, and followed afar off. The parson stopped to talk with a friend near the shop of an embroiderer who had a chasuble hanging up before the door. Into this shop

entered the knave and bartered for the raiment, but wished before paying to see how it would look on a priest. Just then, in the nick of time, the parson, having parted with his friend, came by.

"Reverend sir," quoth the rogue, "be good enough to enter and try on this garment."

The parson, with his purse hanging in his girdle, entered, and with much charity put on the chasuble. Taking advantage of a favourable moment, the knave seized the purse and ran down the street, followed closely by the priest. After him ran the embroiderer, well assured that all was but an artifice to rob him of the raiment. The fat ecclesiastic was soon caught by the embroiderer, but while the merchant was examining him as to his complicity, the thief escaped. The story, which was popular in its time, is told by various authors, and is termed by one of them a diabolical device.

Another story has for its hero a rich old man who was jealous of his young and pretty wife. Falling sick in due time, and feeling himself about to die, he summoned his wife to his bedside and besought her as a last favour, with tears in his poor old eyes, not to marry the object of his jealousy, a neighbour, when he was gone.

"I will not," said the dutiful woman. "I will not, my dear husband; be in no concern for him—nay, I could not, for I have been for some years past engaged to another!"

Of course, wives of this type are not to be found in existence nowadays.

"NUPTIALITY," OR CHANCE OF MARRIAGE.

HAVING once tasted the sweets of married life men cannot, it seems, remain single. It appears that of 1,000 single men of twenty-five to thirty-five years of age, 110 or 112 marry each year. On the other hand, the corresponding number for widowers is 356, or three times as many. At other ages the difference is still greater; widowers marry four times more than bachelors of the same age, and in the case of young men (twenty-one and under) the numbers are 290 and four respectively.

In the case of females, M. Bertillon (who has produced folios of figures) obtains similar results, though less decided. From twenty-five to thirty years of age, when Dutch girls marry most, widows are found to marry about twice as much, and a corresponding difference appears throughout similarly in Switzerland, and in England. There are two exceptions to this rule, however. In Berlin widows past thirty marry almost exactly in the same proportion as spinsters, and in France they marry a little less. The state of young widowhood seems to press the same everywhere.

Is the state of things in France, then, to be explained by saying that French husbands are wickeder than others? "I prefer to believe," says M. Bertillon, "that they are, on the contrary, too good, and that they leave widows absolutely inconsolable."

INFATUATION.

AMONG the competitors in the French Lottery, says the "Continental Gazette," was a person who held 14,000 tickets, but gained nothing beyond a few of the trivial "petits lots," scarcely worth the trouble of fetching. The person in question was a Parisian female cook, who had been for several years in such a good place, that she had been able to save nearly six hundred pounds. The poor woman became so infatuated with the lottery speculation that she embarked in "series" after "series," purchasing positive piles of tickets, till the series of her banknotes dwindled down to one only. The deluded cuisinière kept on buying to make "assurance doubly sure," and she fully believed

that she was making an investment that would enable her to abandon the fabrication of rags and pot-aux-feus.

May such a loss as that she has sustained serve as a lesson for herself and others never to embark again in lottery speculations as the means of gaining a fortune!

THE French authorities maintain a weather observatory on the summit of Puy-de-Dôme, one of the highest of the Auvergne mountains, having an elevation of nearly five thousand feet. Mons. Valentin, the meteorologist stationed there this winter, has been cut off from communication with the rest of the world as long as fourteen days at a time, in consequence of the snow, which obstructed access to the summit and interrupted the telegraph.

It is not a fact—as has been stated—that the Zulu men may not marry until they are at least 40 years of age, or until the king has granted them permission to enter the matrimonial state. A Zulu may not take unto himself a wife, or wives if he be rich enough to have several, or many, until he has proved himself a warrior—i.e., won his spurs. There are many candidates for matrimony in the Zulu army, and in fighting the white man they are, in some cases, fighting for the right to possess a wife.

Miss M. A. PAULL of Plymouth, has been informed that to her has been awarded the prize of £100 offered by the United Kingdom Band of Hope Union for the best tale on temperance specially adapted for children. There were several hundred competitors.

HER MAJESTY intends to visit the camp at Aldershot in April. The pavilion is now being prepared in expectation of the Royal presence.

"Living jewellery" is just now all the rage in Paris. Fair Parisiennes, it is stated, are eagerly vying with each other in their efforts to be in the new mode. The idea is extremely nasty; its great eccentricity alone saves it from meeting the condemnation of disgust.

PROBABLY at the last dreadful day, when Gabriel sounds his trump, if he doesn't stop once or twice between the blasts and shout "General! general! colonel, I say?" not more than two-fifths of the men in American cemeteries will get up.

AMONG American patents is the following: "To John Allen, of Cincinnati, Ohio, for a method of restoring the fulness or roundness to the cheeks." The patentee claims, as his invention, and desires to secure by letters patent, restoring hollow cheeks to their natural contour and rotundity by means of metallic bulbs, formed, fitted to, and secured in the mouth by any suitable attachment between the jaw-bones and the cheek!

"DELIGHTFULLY ugly!" was the recent expression of a young lady, when contemplating a Monsieur. Was she sarcastic, or expressing a received idea? There are novelists, we know, who have written in ecstacies about male ugliness, and here are the remarks in that strain of a literary man of great genius, we don't know his name: "The ugly, theyalone are picturesque. Irregularity is to their lineaments what undulation is to a landscape, the key to that variety of outline which is all-essential to artistic effect." He is right, a fellow on whom nature has graciously bestowed a turn-up nose, bears about him the physical emblem of disdain, and always seems to be treating the world with the scorn and contempt of which the world is richly deserving. Beetle eyebrows call to mind a glossy, amiable insect; big cheek bones have a bold, majestic, cliff-like look; a low forehead be-speaks the gentle virtue of humility; and a mouth that is like unto an oven resembles a good thing:

AT Ilkeston, a few days ago, a young woman having several false front teeth went to bed without removing them from her mouth. She was awakened during the night by pain caused by her having partially swallowed the teeth and their appendages, and the case was found to be so serious that the patient had to be sent to the Nottingham infirmary, where she was relieved.



[AN IMPUDENT FELLOW.]

A DARLING LITTLE DUCK.

"WHAT a darling little duck!" She drew herself up, and looked around in haughty surprise, as she heard this impudent remark.

A pretty picture she had made, as she stood there, in the shadow of the young wood, watching some ducks disporting in the water. The afternoon sun was getting low, and sent its beams aslant among the trees, lighting up her white dress, and her even whiter throat, and bringing her dark hair out in bold relief against the light-green, leafy background. One hand held by a young sapling, and the wide sleeve, falling back, disclosed the round, ivory arm; while in the other hand was her closed parasol, and her hat, which she had taken off on account of the heat.

Her small, but plump figure, with its swelling bust, trim waist, and rounded outlines, completed a picture of rare loveliness.

She had not heard the approaching footsteps, and was a little startled at the interruption.

"I beg pardon," said a rich, manly voice, in grave tones, however, this time; and a tall, handsome young man, apparently about three-and-twenty, advanced.

He lifted his hat with an ease only to be learned in the best society, and continued:

"I was apostrophising that darling of a duck. I hope I have not alarmed you."

Our heroine did not believe a word of this glib

apology; but it was impossible to tell the man so to his face.

She bowed coldly, and made no answer.

"I fear I am on private grounds," resumed the young man, noticing, for the first time, that a gravelled walk, finished by a short flight of steps, led down to the little pond. "I was told I could get back to the village sooner if I came through these woods; but nothing was said about the grounds being private."

"It does not matter," answered our heroine, haughtily. "But I wish you good-day, sir." And she turned and went up the steps.

"It was really too impudent in me," soliloquised Charley Stafford, as he watched the receding figure. "She's no fool; she doesn't believe me. What a graceful walk! Now, if it was only she, instead of my bugbear, Miss Thorndyke, whom they're so eager to marry me to, I might not be running away."

For this was the whole story. Our hero, coming home from the Continent, after an absence of two years, found that his mother had planned to marry him to a distant cousin, a great heiress. "She is just the girl for you, my son," Mrs. Stafford had said. "You remember her, don't you? I have been so afraid that somebody would carry her off before you returned. But I think I may say she is yet heart-whole. And such a fortune! I have asked her to pay us a visit, and she comes next week."

"Comes next week? Comes to marry me, whether I will or not? Good heavens, madame, do you think I'm a bale of goods, to be ticketed, advertised, sold, and delivered in this manner?"

In vain his mother expostulated, explained, and argued. To her it seemed quite natural that she should select a wife for her boy. She knew better than he did, she told herself, what kind of a one he wanted; a peculiarity, not uncommon, we have observed, with mothers generally. But Charley Stafford was quite of a different opinion. The more his mother expostulated on the wisdom of the match, the more convinced he became that she and Miss Thorndyke were in a plot against him. "A girl of any modesty would shrink from coming to a young man's house in this way," he said, in anger. "She is to be here to-morrow, you say. 'Well, to-morrow I leave for the Lakes; and there I shall stay till she takes herself home again.'

And he left the room abruptly.

His mother was a little startled. It must be confessed, by this outburst. But she said to herself, that he did not mean it. "After having been away so long, he surely won't go off in such a hurry," she reflected. "He'll like Kate, in spite of himself, when he sees how handsome she has grown. He can't help himself."

What was her dismay, the next morning, to hear that Charley had actually left, and two hours before she was up.

"Really gone!" she exclaimed to her maid.

"Yes, ma'am," was the reply, "and left word he wouldn't be back for a month."

A month was the exact period named for Miss Thorndyke's visit.

That afternoon Charley stopped at the pretty little village of Marlowe, which lay directly in his way, intending to stay till the morning, as he never travelled at night. He had taken his bath, changed his clothes, eaten his dinner, and then started out for a walk, during which, as we have seen, he had come across this pretty vision.

"I wonder if she lives in this place," he soliloquised, as he walked back to the hotel. "She doesn't look exactly rural. She is more like a city girl, though she dresses too smart for that."

The next morning, at ten o'clock, Charley took his seat in the through train, when it came along. He had just succeeded in securing an empty seat, and had settled himself for a run of a hundred miles, when, on looking around, he saw two female figures, one of which was apparently a lady's maid, and the other the mistress; something in the air of the latter looked not unfamiliar, and directly, when a guard came along, and she turned her face to ask a question, Charley saw that it was the face of the fair nymph of the woods, his "darling duck."

For some time he kept puzzling his brains how to address her. "If some of those people behind her would only go out," he said to himself, "I would take their seats, and begin a conversation somehow."

But the people did not go out, and at last the train stopped at the Junction, as it was called, and the guard came along, crying out, "Twenty minutes for refreshments."

"Now is my chance," said Charley to himself, and rose to offer to help the young lady. But everybody rose also, the young lady too. As she was nearer the door than Charley, she got out first, and when he reached the dining-saloon she was already seated at table, with her maid on one side, and a fat old country-woman on the other, and as completely entrenched as in the train. As Charley passed her, she chanced to look up and caught his eye. He took off his hat and made a low bow. But her only reply was a well-bred stare, though Charley saw, from the way the corners of her mouth twitched mischievously, that she quite remembered him.

A little annoyed at so decided a "cut," Charley took a seat at some distance, and proceeded to eat his dinner as leisurely as the twenty minutes would allow.

When he had finished he sauntered back to the train, expecting to find the lady in her seat. But the seat was empty, except for a satchel, which he recognised as hers. At the same moment the guard cried out, "Take your seats," and the train began to move.

Charley stood irresolutely in the doorway. Presently the guard came along.

"Is there any other train from here?" Charley asked.

"Why, of course," was the reply. "This is the Junction. Passengers for Lake C— change here."

"Has the train gone?" cried Charley, preparing to jump out, knowing that the lost satchel would serve as an introduction.

"Been gone ten minutes," was the answer; and the guard slammed the door.

Charley hesitated for a moment, and then sat down in his seat.

It was no doubt imagination, for Charley was an imaginative fellow, but he fancied there was a subtle scent of wood-violets about the satchel.

The satchel was half open, and from its mouth peeped forth a book.

"No breach of honour in looking at a book," said Charley. It was Tennyson's Idyls. Charley, with a quick instinct, turned to the fly-leaf in front.

Yes, there it was, her name, written in a delicate female hand, Maud Derwent, with a date, June 20th, 1875.

That evening Charley reached the end of his journey, hot and dusty, but not a little annoyed, that, having met his fair nymph again, he had missed her so stupidly.

Charley found the place intolerably dull, and when he shifted his quarters, discovered that every other place was dull likewise. He made the tour of the lakes in this way, becoming more dissatisfied daily.

Of course he kept the satchel, and took it out occasionally to look at. Somehow, also, he found himself looking at it more and more frequently. He began, too, to think a good deal of its owner.

"Confound her," he said, at last, "she has bewitched me! I can't get her out of my head. I believe I'm in love with her."

He was now at a fishing village. He had gone out fishing, the morning he made his last confession to himself; but the fish would not bite; and soon getting tired of it, he threw himself on the grass, under a rocky bluff, and began dreamily speculating about the blue eyes.

Suddenly he heard a splash in front of him, and saw a portefolio floating down the stream. A log jutted into the water.

Walking out on this, he caught the portefolio, lazily, with his hook and line: and then looked around quite as lazily for the owner. Somebody, at this, burst into a merry peal of laughter overhead.

He looked quickly up.

No less a person than his blue-eyed nymph was laughing at him.

The discovery was so annoying that he lost his balance, and was precipitated into the water, from which he emerged, dripping.

Charley paused for a moment, in ill-concealed mortification.

Then, putting a brave face on the matter, he shook himself like a water-dog, and began to spring up the rocky path, three steps at a time, in order to return the portefolio.

"I am so sorry," said the young lady, as he drew near. "It was unpardonable. If I had not been so rude you would not have fallen."

Charley had now recovered his self-possession.

"It is I who am unpardonable," he said, with a low bow, "for presenting myself to a lady in such a guise."

"And to whom am I indebted?"

It was the sweetest voice Charley had ever heard.

He took out his card-case and fortunately found a card not too wet to offer her.

She read it, slowly, to herself. "Mr. Charles Stafford," she repeated, aloud. Then she looked at him deliberately.

"But you are standing here in your wet clothes," she said, with a blush, as if just recollecting it. "Pray, hasten home, quickly, or you will catch cold."

"Am I to take that as a dismissal, Miss Derwent?" said Charley, bowing and smiling.

"How did you learn my name?" she said, looking up quickly.

"Where there's a will there's a way," nonchalantly replied Charley.

"You are not a detective, off duty, are you?" she said, with a merry twinkle of the eye.

"No. You left your satchel in the train, the other day. A book you had been reading fell out. Your name was on the fly-leaf."

"Oh! I remember. But, indeed, indeed, you must change your dress. I shall never forgive myself if you get sick. Nay, if you talk, I will go. Good-bye." And before he could stop her, she had darted down the opposite path, and was lost to sight in the woods below.

"And I never found out where she was staying," said Charley, lugubriously, as he walked homewards. "What a stupid I have been!"

He could think of nothing but Miss Derwent after this.

Early next moment he was at the rock again, but he waited in vain to see her. He had no better success the second day, nor the third day.

Meantime, he visited all the hotels in the vicinity, and even inquired at the boarding-houses, but in vain.

"She must be at some private farmhouse," he said, as he repaired, on the fourth day, to the rock, "and I shall never see her again."

But even as he spoke, there she sat, just before him, quietly sketching.

She looked up, at his footstep, and nodded indifferently.

"I hope you did not catch cold," she said, beginning the conversation. "But your being able to come out is a proof you did not. I am finishing the sketch I began the other day," and she held up the paper, frankly.

"A cool hand," Charley said to himself. But not to be outdone, he replied in a tone of easy assurance; and as he talked well, these two, who had met but thrice before, soon got intimate.

At the end of half an hour the lady laid down her pencil, and prepared to go. Charley, of course, asked to escort her home.

At first she seemed to hesitate, but finally assented. As he had expected, she was living at a farmhouse.

"I am the only one here not of the family," she said. "It is a small place, as you see, and there is no parlour."

"Which means I am not to be asked in?"

"I have no place to ask you, unless you sit on the fence," she replied gaily, as the labourers do, I believe, on Sunday nights, when they go a-court—"

She stopped with a blush. Her light spirits had carried her further than she intended.

"I have ceased to be on the fence," said Charley, pointedly.

She blushed again. It was impossible to mistake his meaning. But she was not one to be discomfited easily. "Take care you have not got down on the wrong side," she answered, laughingly, and ran into the house.

"Was that a slap in the face?" said Charley. But faint heart never won fair lady. And, faith!

I like her the better for her sauciness.

He did not want for confidence in himself, you see, though his confidence was a good deal shaken, when calling at the farmhouse day after day, he always was told "not at home."

At last, after several attempts, Charley found Miss Derwent in the porch, sketching.

"You don't seem to care to see me," he said, chagrined, as she looked up, nodding carelessly. "I have been here daily for three days. I wouldn't have found you at home now, I'm afraid, if it hadn't been raining."

"I always go out when I can," she replied, putting in a bit of colour on one of her trees. Then, raising her eyes to his, she said bluntly,

"Besides, I don't like truants; and you are a truant, sir."

"A truant!"

"Yes! Mr. Charles Stafford is a person, as I suspected when I first heard his name, of whom I know just the least little bit. He is, at this moment, a runaway, a truant. You can't deny it. Guilt is in your face," she added, triumphantly, as she saw his crestfallen look.

"A runaway, a truant!" he stammered, more confused than ever.

"Yes! It means, sir," shaking her head reprovingly, "you are engaged to a far-away cousin, and just when you were expected to fulfil your engagement, you ran off. Such is the gossip, at least, that comes to me from London. Very wicked of you! Going about under false pretences, I should say. How lucky my correspondent happened to tell me. Some poor, easily-deluded girl, at your hotel, might otherwise have fallen in love with you, for they say you are a dreadful flirt. I shall post you all over Cumberland, or at least I suppose I ought to!" She laughed again her merry laugh.

Charley, driven to desperation, now told his story. He was anything but the self-possessed Charley of their first interview. He pulled at his whiskers, stammered for words, and could hardly meet Miss Derwent's eye.

"I've not seen her since she was a child," he concluded. "We've no tastes in common."

"How do you know if you haven't seen her?" maliciously interposed his tormentor.

He took a turn, half-angrily, up to the end of the porch, and came back.

"The match was made up for me," he went on, ignoring the interruption. There can be no love in such cases."

"Love! Has love anything to do with marriage, now-a-days?"

"Don't poke fun at a fellow," he pleaded, piteously. "I hate Miss Thorndyke. Yes, I hate her."

"Strong language, sir." And Miss Derwent put in some more colour in some more trees. "Is that the way you speak of all your acquaintances?"

"I didn't speak in that way of you, at any rate," retorted Charley, brought to bay. "I—I—I—"

Miss Derwent interrupted him hastily.

"As we cannot be called even acquaintances," she said, with dignity, "perhaps you'd better not speak of me at all. Come, Mr. Stafford, be a good boy; go home to your mother; marry Miss Goody Two Shoes, or whatever her name is; and live happily, as the story-books say, for ever after."

She had begun with great gravity, but now her eyes were dancing with glee again.

"Do you wish to drive me mad?" cried Charley, coming directly to a full stop in front of her, and with a certain masterfulness in his air and attitude that made his hearer give an involuntary start. "I love you—you—you—" emphasising each word more. "Otherwise I wouldn't have made this confession about my cousin. I should have had no right to do it, if I hadn't loved you. I don't know who your correspondent is, but she hasn't told the whole truth. Upon my word, Miss Derwent, I never loved Miss Thorndyke. I never made her any promise. I have never loved anyone but you, and," looking her resolutely in the face, "I never shall."

Miss Derwent began to be a little frightened. This man was not a man to be trifled with. She changed colour rapidly.

"I—I cannot profess to misunderstand you," she answered. "And—and," returning his look, at last, with an effort, "I believe you." Charley tried to catch her hand, but she withdrew it behind her.

"No, that is going quite too fast," with a little nervous laugh. "I hardly know you, remember. I have just told you we are scarcely acquaintances."

"Acquaintances! When I have loved you ever since I first saw you."

She looked up archly. She could not help it.

"Then I was the 'darling duck,' after all," she said, "though you denied it so glibly."

"Forgive me!" His voice was as eloquent as his eyes. "You must have thought me insufferably impertinent. But put me on probation. Give me at least a little hope."

"Come, Mr. Stafford," said his hearer, gravely, "let us make a compact. You have been frank with me, and I believe all you say about Miss Thorndyke. I do not think you could act other-

wise than as a man of honour. I will consent to see more of you, and give you a candid answer, after awhile. A girl can't be married off-hand," with a touch of her old archness, "as you said yourself, just now. But you mustn't call me a flirt, remember, if my decision should be against you. Otherwise, we had better bid good-bye for ever."

So the compact was made. Charley went home full of hope.

"She must like me a little," he said to himself, "or she would have refused me flatly." He seemed to go on wings.

She did like him a little, as he very soon discovered.

He had won her by his impetuosity and masterfulness, though she did not herself know it at first.

Before three weeks had gone by they were as good as engaged.

"That is," was Miss Derwent's proviso, "if your mother consents. I will never enter a family where I am not welcome."

"Oh! I am sure of her consent, especially when she finds I will not marry Miss Thorndyke."

"Poor Miss Thorndyke," said his listener, with a sigh.

"You needn't say 'poor Miss Thorndyke.' I've no doubt she can get plenty of lovers. She's very rich, you know."

The next day Charley said, "So you go to Brighton, under escort of your friends, the Winthrops, and not with me. I may thank Mrs. Grindly for that. But I suppose I must submit. My mother, fortunately, has gone to Brighton herself. I have just had a letter. I shall gain half a day over you if I start this evening. I shall do it, and when you arrive, my mother will be prepared to welcome you."

Two days after, a carriage drove up to a fashionable hotel, and Charley and his mother descended from it.

Our hero had made good use of the few hours by which he had preceeded his mistress. He had told the whole story to Mrs. Stafford, keeping back, however, what Miss Derwent had said about her consent.

"And you intend to marry this girl?" said his mother, coldly, breaking a long silence.

"Yes! I shall be sorry to have you against me, but I shall marry her, whether or no."

Mrs. Stafford remembered his father; remembered a certain look about the mouth; and seeing that look in Charley now, gave in.

"Well," she said, after another long pause, and with a sigh, "I will go with you, and call on her. If it has to be done, I will do it with a good grace, whether I feel like it or not. You say she is here in Brighton."

This was the object of their visit to the hotel.

Mrs. Stafford and her son were shown into a handsome private parlour. The blinds were down in consequence of the heat and glare. A graceful figure, hardly distinguishable at first, in the obscurity, rose to receive them.

"Mother," said Charley, "Miss Derwent."

"Miss Derwent?" cried Mrs. Stafford, in a tone of surprise.

She looked from one to the other in turn, as if for an explanation.

In Miss Derwent's eyes there began to sparkle that roughish look which Charley had learnt to associate with mischief of some sort. The inclination to mirth was too much for her, and she broke into a peal of laughter, in which, after a moment, Mrs. Stafford joined, as if it was infectious.

It was Charley's turn now to look for an explanation.

"My dear boy," said his mother at last, "there is some mistake here; this is no Miss Derwent; this is Kate Thorndyke."

"Kate Thorndyke!"

"Forgive me, Charley," said the young lady, hardly able, even yet, to control her merriment, "but if you ran away from me, I, on my part, ran away from you. I never promised your mother to visit her; she only took it for granted. On the contrary, I resolved to put as many miles between me and the conceited fellow, for so

everybody called you, who had refused me when I had never even offered myself. Accident threw us together. I was at a friend's, Miss Derwent's, when we first met. It was her Tennyson you found in my satchel. I really did not know who you were until the day you gave me your card. Then, discovering your mistake, I determined, for a while at least, not to undeceive you. After that," she looked down demurely, "things somehow shaped themselves. I couldn't resist being loved, you know, for myself, and not for my fortune, when I had the chance. There, you know all now. I ran away from you, and you ran away from me; and it was no use, after all, was it, dear?" She clung fondly to his arm. "Your mother has got the better of both of us. I suppose the world would call me foolish, and you an idiot, and your mother an idiot, and all of us fools together, but—"

Charley, by this time, had recovered from his surprise. He seized her hands, taking her in his arms, regardless of his mother's presence.

"No," he said, "anything but that. And as for you, you are, and always shall be, what I called you at first, a darling little duck." —H. R.

FACETIA.

COOL COMPANY—Hail fellows well met, an' ice flocs. —Funny Folks.

A GOOD WORD FOR HER LAST PLACE.

YOUNG PERSON (applying for housemaid's place): "A young lady as lived with you as cook, mum, told me as you was a very nice woman to get on with!" —Punch.

NATIONAL SCHOOLING.

"Nations learn slowly—but they do learn." —(John Bright's letter in the "Times.")

OUT ON THE NATIONS—the dunces!—that dazily

Master the lessons that should make them wise;

Thumbing the horn-book, the A B C lazily, Slow in the use of their ears and their eyes. Centuries over the alphabet squandering,

Ere to one-syllable spelling they turn.

O'er a b, ab, and their b a, ba, pondering,

Sometimes we doubt if they really do

learn.

The school they are taught in's the school of adversity,

In which they are all of them entered

when young;

A hard school, indeed, yet whoe'er would asperse it, he

Must still listen, mute, while its praises

are sung.

Their teachers are many, their methods are various,

The worth of much taught it is hard to discern,

And it must be confessed the results are precarious;

Yes, they learn slowly, but doubt not—they learn.

Would that some Power the speed would accelerate

Whereby both knowledge and wisdom are gained;

Or that the prophet at least might foretell a rate

Greater than any they yet have attained.

Progress is welcome whatever the rate of it,

Access of light it were wicked to spurn; But it is tiresome, and that's the true state of it,

Nations should all be such dullards to learn. —Funny Folks.

VALUABLE RECEIPT.

To lengthen the hair, an obvious way is to get someone to draw it out. —Funny Folks.

IT WAS LIKE THAT.

WILTSHIRE FARMER (who has been asked how it was that his daughters had not got married): "Well, 'ee zee, zur, zum yarsagone them as wud ha' them, they wudn't have; and now, them as they wud have won't ha' them." —Judy.

SHE MEANT WELL.

NEW AND ENERGETIC CURATE: "Do you know what to-morrow is?"

OLD WOMAN: "Indeed, yes, sir, and I allers eats 'ashed mutton on Ash Wednesday, as I likes to keep the Festivals of the Church."

—Judy.

DOUBLE DEALING.

FIRST FARMER: "Not sold the old 'orse, neighbour! What d'ye ask for him? Give ye twenty!"

SECOND FARMER: "Twenty! Why, I gave forty for him not more'n a year ago!"

F. F.: "Ah, well, well! See ye ag'in! Ye're thinkin' double, I see, this evenin'!"

—Judy.

HARD TIMES IN THE CITY.

HARD-UP CITY MAN (to Clerk, who wants a rise): "Half-a-crown a week more—impossible; but—(happy thought)—I'll tell you what I'll do for you, I'll take you into partnership."

—Judy.

HIS IDEA OF A BISHOP.

An Irish clergyman, who, for his wit, ought to have been made a bishop long since (if wit did it), was being mildly chaffed the other day at a club on his roving and ne'er-do-well habits, when his oldest friend, among the group said:

"I thought, Harry, when you left the university, that with your splendid talents and great influence you would rise rapidly to the dignity of a bishop."

"Well, sor," was the rejoinder, as he drew himself up to his full height with great dignity, "and I might have done that, to be sure, but I'm a gentleman, sor, and cannot wear an apron."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

SWELL: "Oh, Robinson, I am not at all satisfied with these trousers."

SHOPKEEPER: "Indeed, sir! Sorry to hear that. We made 'em to measure too!"

SWELL: "Yaas. But, you see, I didn't want them to measure—I wanted them to wear!"

—Funny Folks.

"BEATI POSSIDENTES."

CANVASSER (to thrifty rustic, who has recently taken a little farm): "Well, Thomas, you'll give your vote to Squire Shoddy at the next election?"

THOMAS: "No, I shan't. I ha' got 'un, and I mean to keep 'un myself; I bean't a-goin' to gi' 'un to nobody!"

—Punch.

SIGNIFICANT SIGNS.

To call at a friend's house about dinner time, and find him absent, is a sign you will be disappointed.

To drop hot sealing-wax on your fingers is a sign you will be angry.

To receive advise of your mother-in-law's projected visit is a sign you are going to leave home for a time.

To meet a bolting horse on the pavement implies that you are going to run.

To dream of being run over by fire-engines is often a sign you have had pork-chops for supper.

To pick up money is lucky.

If a man says, "I hardly like to ask you, old man; but"—it's a sign he's going to borrow money.

To collide with three consecutive lamp-posts and fall over an apple-stall is a sign you are not a Good Templar.

To lose money or jewellery is unlucky.

If you see a man buy "Fun" it's a sign he's going to laugh.

—Fun.

A WOMAN applied for a situation recently, with her clothes dripping like a water-spout. Being questioned as to her condition, she said she understood the lady of the house wanted a wet nurse, and she had come ready for service.

WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

LADY: "Can you oblige me with a school prospectus, or are the principals within?"

SERVANT: "The prospectuses as is generally here, mum, is absent at present, and I'm sorry to say that just now we're quite without principles."

—Fun.

A CLEAR ADDRESS.

THE "Echo" thinks it wonderful that a letter addressed to:

"My mother,

New York,"

should get delivered safely. But why? Surely the address is "a-parent" enough for anybody.

—Fun.

OUR DETECTIVE COMMISSIONER.

(Scene: Departure of troops for Zululand. Inquisitive American starts conversation with Englishman.)

"COMMISSIONER arrangements complete, I guess, stra-anger?"

"Oh, yes."

"Plenty of candy?"

"Candy? Oh, dear no, sir."

"Tons of popcorn?"

"No."

"Cargoes of chewing-gum, anyhow?"

"Never heard of such a thing."

"Je-ru-salem! And you 'spect them to go in and win without stimulants?"

—Funny Folks.

ANATOMICAL IMPOSSIBILITIES.

(By Our Own Contortionist.)

To walk over the bridge of your nose.
To poison beetle brows.
To brush up a curl of the lip.
To teach the pupil of the eye.
To get a tune out of the "play of the muscles."

To embark in one of the vessels of the lungs.
To travel by the routes of the hair.
To wear a feather in your knee-cap.
To make your calves bleat.
To fit an amber mouthpiece to the wind-pipe.
To play sonatas on your digestive organs.
To echo the "holloa!" of the back.
No take a dose of your own physique.

—Funny Folks.

STATISTICS.

UPWARDS of 40,000 lottery tickets remain to be verified, of which the greater number are in the hands of foreigners. A limit of time will shortly be fixed, after which the objects remaining in the Palais de l'Industrie will be sold, and the profits handed over to the hospitals. Thirty-five thousand lots have already been disposed of.

VOTE OF CREDIT FOR THE ZULU WAR.—A parliamentary paper issued by the Treasury states that a vote of credit of £1,500,000 will be asked for "beyond the ordinary grants of parliament, towards defraying the expenditure which will come in course of payment during the year ending March 31, 1879, in consequence of the war in South Africa." The following is a statement showing the services to which the sum will probably be applicable:—
A. Army—Pay &c., staff and departments, supplies, field allowances, army transport, clothing, and warlike stores, £1,000,000; **B. Navy**—Transport, £200,000; **C. Contingencies**, £300,000; total, £1,500,000.

THE WEATHER IN 1878.—The mean temperature of 1878, as shown at Greenwich Observatory, exceeded the average in every one of the first ten months of the year, but there was a marked deficiency in November and December; the mean for the year was 49.7 deg., or 1.2 deg. above the last 37 years' average. The rainfall at Greenwich in 1878 amounted to 29.2 in., measured on 106 days; this rainfall exceeded

the average by nearly 4 in. The number of hours of bright sunshine registered at Greenwich Observatory in 1878 was 1,250, or 28 per cent. of its possible duration, the sun being above the horizon for 4,454 hours.

THE WORKMAN'S HOME.

I TAKE an honest pride, I own,
In this my home of peace,
Which slowly round my life hath grown
With gradual increase,
As round her form the bird with care
Slow moulds the perfect nest
With little tufts of moss and hair,
And down from her own breast.
The sweat of manly labour's found
In every clapboard there,
And my own hands laid out the ground
That makes this garden fair.

Content beside my hearthstone sits,
Where Thrift is likewise seen,
And Love through every chamber flits
As household fairy-queen;
For the little wife that bids me forth,
Light-hearted, to my work,
Counts worldly wealth of little worth,
If Care beneath it lurk;
And, oh! her smile is gentle when
I homeward swiftly press
To light and love and joy again,
And childhood's soft caress.

A picture sweet to mind she brings
When by the hearth she stands.
With folds of gown and apron-strings
Clutched at by chubby hands,
While from her neck the baby spreads
Its little arms, and crows,
And glancing firelight round their heads
A saintly halo throws;
Then sweet good-evening kisses cleave
Fatigue's stern bonds apart,
With mellow light and warmth that leave
A pastime of the heart.

Our door the motto "Welcome" wreathes,
While, o'er the fireplace there,
"God Bless Our Home," in worsted breathes
Its strong, but silent, prayer.
Secure in the contentment which
A quiet conscience yields,
We envy not the proud and rich
Their broad and sweeping fields;
Nor visions vast of sparkling sheen,
Of coach and palace dome,
Can ever come, like dreams, between
The workman and his home.

We've seen, 'tis true, hard times and
rough,
But in the cupboard there
We've still, by thrift, kept bread enough
To feed us, and to spare.
I've still my strong and willing hands,
Come what come may, and fast
My little home around me stands,
A bulwark to the last;
For hearts the corner-stones remain,
Hope props the roof-tree high,
And the love and faith its walls contain
Can never, never die!

N. D. U.

GEMS.

NOTHING is more certain than that human conduct produces its effect upon human character and determines its future weal or woe. Virtue and uprightness give the pure heart and clear conscience, whose working is an ample reward for effort and sacrifice.

The most agreeable of all companions is a simple, frank man, without any high pretensions to an oppressive greatness; one who loves life, and understands the use of it; obliging,—alike at all hours; above all, of a golden temper, and

steadfast as an anchor. For such a one we gladly exchange the greatest genius, the most brilliant wit, the profoundest thinker.

A SMOOTH sea never made a skilful mariner. Neither do uninterrupted prosperity and success qualify a man for usefulness and happiness. The storms of adversity, like the storms of the ocean, rouse the faculties and excite the invention, prudence, skill and fortitude of the voyager.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TOFFEE.—Put one quarter pound of butter into a preserving pan; when melted, add one pound of brown sugar, stir gently over the fire for about fifteen minutes, add a small teaspoonful of ground ginger, or a little finely grated lemon peel; boil and stir again, until the mixture when dropped into cold water becomes crisp. When done sufficiently pour it on to buttered plates, or on to a marble slab.

TAPIOCA PUDDING.—Cover a cup of tapioca with water for several hours; add the yolks of three eggs, a cup of sugar, half a teaspoonful of salt, and a quart of milk; mix well together, and bake in a quick oven half an hour; then lay the whites of the eggs beaten to a froth on the top; to be eaten cold with flavoured cream.

CODFISH CAKES.—Boil a piece of salt cod; take out all the bones, and mash with it equal quantities of potatoes. Season it with pepper and salt to your taste; then add as much beaten egg as will form it into paste. Make it into thin cakes, flour them, and fry them of a light brown.

BEEFSTEAK WITH ONIONS.—Melt a piece of butter in a saucepan, and in it fry to a golden colour an onion sliced very finely, or a couple of shallots minced; add a sprinkling of pepper, and pour over the steak.

MISCELLANEOUS.

It is said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has an eye on the tramways should it be necessary to add to the taxation of the country this year.

MUNKACSY.—Hungarian painter, has sold in Vienna his picture of "Milton Dictating 'Paradise Lost'" to his Daughters, for the enormous sum of 260,000 francs. Munkacsy has only painted a few years; previously he was a carpenter.

SNOWDROP BULBS.—It is not generally known that almost the whole of the bulbs sold by the trade in this country are grown in Lincolnshire.

THE DEATH OF MICHAEL SULLIVANT.—Who at one time possessed and cultivated 80,000 acres of land in Illinois, America.

THE MARGATE TOWN COUNCIL.—Have decided to buy the Water Company's property, and take the supply into their own hands. The price to be paid is £59,000.

FEENCH BREEDERS.—Have been invited to take part in the International Cattle Show to be held at Kilburn, under the patronage of the Prince of Wales, on June 30.

THE QUEEN.—Is expected to be absent from England about three weeks at the time of Her Majesty's visit to Germany.

A PRIVATE MEETING.—of the principal retail grocers of the metropolis and the country was recently held in London for the purpose of forming a co-operative association to meet the competition of the Civil Service stores. An influential committee was formed, and the association will be registered under the Joint Stock Companies Act.

A dog has been exhibited with great success in Indians, whose skin is perfectly smooth, the hair growing on the inside—at least the exhibitor says so, and anyone who doubts the statement is welcome to pay £400 for the privilege of killing the animal to find out.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BOX.—We cannot answer without fuller details. How did your brother become possessed of the property?

MAIDSTONE.—We never heard that the interesting gentleman alluded to was a convict.

POWER.—The University Boatrace will be on the 5th of April.

NOLAN.—There are a great many dentrifrices, but we prefer what is well known as Richards' Sodaont, to be obtained of all chemists. It uses imparts the most fragrant breath, and it beautifies, cleanses, and preserves the teeth. Nothing is worse than impure breath, caused by bad teeth, &c.

LILLO.—Gustavus Vaughan Brooke, the actor, was born on the 25th of April, 1819, and was, consequently, nearly forty-seven when he met with his sad fate on his voyage to Australia.

VENE.—Saville House, Leicester Square, was burnt down yesterday, February 28, 1865.

P. T.—The poem was by Doctor Wolcott, who wrote under the name of Peter Pindar, and who died January 16, 1819.

S. I.—You are too young to decide against your parents' wishes, and to disregard their wishes would be wrong in you. Do nothing hastily or clandestinely.

WILL wishes to know if "No one puts their feet here but you" is grammatical. "One" is singular; so is "puts." The plural "their" ought not to be used, therefore, but "his."

R. P.—There is no cure for moles, but you may take consolation from the fact that they are considered a sign of beauty.

FLORENCE.—No sensible girl will allow anyone to monopolise her "company" until he avows himself her lover.

C. P. says: "Do you think it is bold for a young lady to play tricks on gentlemen—such as pinning handkerchiefs or pulling chairs from under them. Ought the gentleman to get angry?" We think it is very bold for a young lady to play such tricks. In fact, we do not think that a lady of any age would do such a thing. Of course the gentleman on whom such tricks are played ought not to get angry. That would be undignified, and if a gentleman should ever need all the dignity within his resources we think it would be when he discovered that a lady had pinned a handkerchief to his coat-tail, or when he was picking himself up from the floor after a lady had pulled his chair from under him.

SUFFERER.—Soak your feet every night in warm water and wear woollen socks, changing them every day. Twice a week use a little chloride of lime or sal ammoniac in the water you wash your feet in. Your trouble from perspiration will soon disappear.

C. O.—To stain wood a mahogany colour boil half a pound of madder and two ounces of logwood chips in one gallon of water, and brush well over the wood while hot. When dry go over the whole with pearlash solution, using two drachms of pearlash to a quart of water.

READER asks what is meant by so many parts of this or that in the receipts given. A part is a unit of quantity; for example, it may be weight, as so many pounds or ounces, or it may be measure, so many gallons, quarts, pints, or ounces.

V. W.—Dip them for a short time in dilute sulphuric acid.

H. S.—The lenses of a camera would answer for an object glass for a telescope, but not so well as lenses of a longer focus.

FRED.—To prevent the condensation of moisture on show window glasses the interior of the show window should have free communication, top and bottom, with the external air. If the air within the show window is kept nearly as cold as the external air no condensation will take place.

TOM.—The fact that a stone falls more rapidly than a feather is due solely to the unequal resistance opposed by the air to the descent of these bodies. In a vacuum all bodies fall with equal rapidity.

M. P.—To clean and polish the silver cases of watches well-prepared rouge, or infusorial earth, rotten stone, tripoli, &c., are used. Well burnished silver requires no other polishing.

GEORGE.—To insulate wire for magnets and other uses a coating of thick shellac varnish will answer if the wire is wound before it becomes thoroughly dry as to crack on bending the wire; it is better, however, to wind the wire with silk or cotton.

OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL CONTAIN AN
INTERESTING AND EXHAUSTIVE ACCOUNT

OF THE

ROYAL MARRIAGE AT WINDSOR,

By our Own Reporter,

WITH PORTRAITS OF THE ROYAL AND HAPPY PAIR.

M. C., twenty, dark, of a loving disposition, domesticated, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-four, good-tempered.

HENRY would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen, fond of home and children.

CLAUDE DU VAL, tall, curly hair, would like to correspond with a young lady. Respondent must be eighteen, good-looking.

F. C. M., twenty-two, medium height, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

LETITIA and FANNY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Letitia is eighteen, dark, handsome. Fanny is seventeen, blue eyes, fair, domesticated.

TILLIE, YOKA, and COMPASS, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Tillie is twenty-three, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes. Yoka is twenty-four, auburn hair, blue eyes, good-looking. Compass is thirty-six, dark hair and eyes, tall.

BIANCA, twenty-four, light hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age, dark, good-looking.

P. T., eighteen, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady.

"LIFE IS TOO SHORT."

LIFE is too short to waste
In unavailing tears,
Too short to spend in bootless grief,
In coward doubts and fears.

To short to give it up
To pleasure; or to sow
One hour in guilt, to yield at last
Eternity of woe.

Time lags not on its way,
But spans our days in haste;
If life should last a thousand years
'Twere still too short to waste.

For, short-lived as we are,
Our pleasures yet, we see,
Evanish soon, they live, indeed,
E'en shorter date than we.

But ever with us here
Bide sorrow, pain, and care;
The shortest life is long enough
Its 'lotted grief to bear.

To the old the end is nigh;
To the young far off it seems;
Yet neither should dare to toy with life.
Or waste it in idle dreams.

For by each Time's servant waits,
Though not for servant's wage;
And the same worm nibbles the bud
of youth.
That gnaweth the root of age.

Live, therefore, as he lives
Who earns his share of bliss;
Strive for the prize that Virtue wins,
Life's not too short for this. G. B.

G. M., fair, good-looking, light brown curly hair, would like to correspond with a good-looking young lady with a view to matrimony.

ROYAL LIFT and TOPGALLANT SHEET, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Royal Lift is good-looking, tall, of a loving disposition. Topgallant Sheet is of medium height, fond of home.

CARRIE, nineteen, medium height, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-two, tall, of a loving disposition, good-looking.

TILLY, twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, fond of home, good-looking, dark, medium height, would like to correspond with a young gentleman. Respondent must be twenty-three, fond of home and children, dark, good-looking.

B. D. and K. P., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony between twenty and twenty-three.

F. B. and L. A., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. F. B. is twenty-four, handsome, dark. L. A. is fair, blue eyes, good-tempered.

ANNIE and CLARE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Annie is twenty, dark, fond of home and children. Clare is fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

KATHLEEN, nineteen, loving, brown hair and eyes, tall, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-one.

S. W. and E. G., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. S. W. is twenty-four, dark, fond of home and children, brown hair, blue eyes. E. G. is twenty-one, dark brown hair, blue eyes, good-looking, medium height, loving. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-two.

KATE W., eighteen, dark brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home.

ALICE, eighteen, brown hair, dark blue eyes, medium height, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-one, dark.

LAURA, medium height, fair, dark eyes, would like to correspond with a dark gentleman about twenty-five, tall.

H. C., eighteen, thoroughly domesticated, tall, dark, light hair, hazel eyes, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-one, of a loving disposition.

HARRIET, dark hair and eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young man. Respondent must be about twenty-five.

FLORENCE, nineteen, golden hair, hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony.

SOPHY and ROSE, two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Sophy is twenty-one, fair, fond of home, loving, medium height. Rose is twenty, fond of home and children, domesticated, fair.

FANNY and ALICE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Fanny is twenty, fond of home. Alice is eighteen, fond of home and children.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

BENJAMIN is responded to by—Amy, twenty, medium height, dark.

ALFRED by—Eva, nineteen, tall, fond of home, loving, fair.

STEVE by—Ada L., nineteen, medium height, fond of home and children.

HANITA LEAVES by—Dancer, of a loving disposition, fond of children.

ERNEST by—Mary, nineteen, brown hair, blue eyes, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home.

ROSIE by—P. J., twenty, good-tempered, dark, medium height.

MARY by—T. G. H., nineteen, dark hair and eyes, dark, loving.

MARGARET by—W. H. G., twenty-one.

M. A. by—M. J., eighteen, auburn hair, light brown eyes, fair.

GEORGE by—Emily, fair, light brown hair, blue eyes, thoroughly domesticated.

REGINALD by—Ellen, twenty-one, dark brown hair and eyes, fond of home.

A. S. by—Ruby, eighteen, curly hair, blue eyes.

JOB by—Helen, twenty-three, golden hair, violet eyes, fond of music.

ALFRED by—Alice, twenty-two, dark hair and eyes.

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